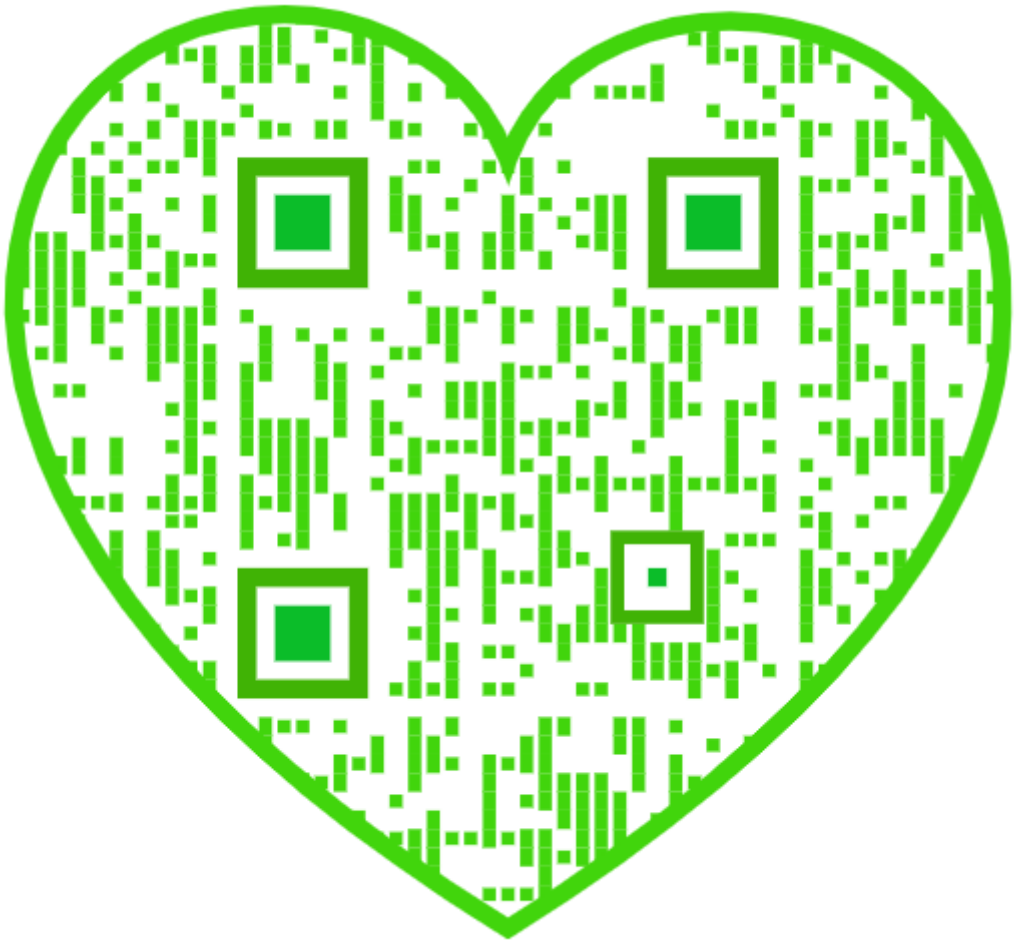

GOLDEN STEPS

FOR

YOUTH.

AUBURN, N.Y.
DERBY, MILLER & Co.

GOLDEN STEPS

TO

Respectability, Usefulness, and Happiness.

BEING A SERIES OF LECTURES TO

YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES,

ON

CHARACTER, PRINCIPLES, ASSOCIATES, AMUSEMENTS, RELIGION, AND MARRIAGE.

BY JOHN MATHER AUSTIN,

AUTHOR OF "VOICE TO YOUTH;" "VOICE TO MARRIED," ETC., ETC.

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"Onward! onward! Toils despising,
Upward, upward! Turn thine eyes,
Only be content when rising,
Fix thy goal amid the skies."

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DERBY, MILLER, AND COMPANY.

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CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

PAGE

THE VALUE OF A GOOD REPUTATION 9

LECTURE II.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF LIFE 30

LECTURE III.

SELECTION OF ASSOCIATES 60

LECTURE IV.

THE HABITS AND AMUSEMENTS 80

LECTURE V.

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS 116

LECTURE VI.

MARRIAGE 194

PREFACE.

The Lectures embraced in this volume, were written for the pulpit, in the usual manner of preparation for such labor, without any expectation of their appearing in print. The author is but too sensible that they are imperfect in many features, both in matter and style. It is only in the hope that they will be of some benefit to the class to whom they are addressed, that he has consented to submit them to public perusal. He has aimed at nothing eccentric, odd, or far-fetched; but has sought to utter plain and obvious truths, in a plain and simple manner. There is no class more interesting, and none which has higher claims on the wisdom, experience, and advice, of mature minds, than the young who are about to enter upon the trying duties and responsibilities of active life. Whatever tends to instruct and enlighten them; to point out the temptations which will beset their pathway, and the dire evils which inevitably flow

from a life of immorality; whatever will influence them to honesty, industry, sobriety, and religion, and lead them to the practice of these virtues, as "Golden Steps" by which they may ascend to Respectability, Usefulness, and Happiness, must be of benefit to the world. To aid in such a work, is the design of this volume. If it subserves this end —if it becomes instrumental in inciting the youthful to high and pure principles of action, in hedging up the way of sin, and opening the path of wisdom, to any—if it drops but a single good seed into the heart of each of its readers, and awakens the slightest aspiration to morality, usefulness, and religion—it will not have been prepared in vain. With a prayer to God that he would protect and bless the youth of our common country, and prepare them to preserve and perpetuate the priceless legacy of Freedom and Religion, which they will inherit from their fathers, this book is given to the world, to fulfil such a mission as Divine Wisdom shall direct.

THE AUTHOR.

AUBURN, June, 1850.

GOLDEN STEPS

FOR

YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES.

LECTURE I.

The Value of a Good Reputation.

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come."—1 Tim. vi. 19.

IN this language St. Paul asserts a principle which should commend itself to the mature consideration of every youthful mind. If the young would have their career honorable and prosperous—if they would enjoy the respect and confidence of community; if they would have the evening of their days calm, serene, and peaceful—they must prepare for it early in life. They must lay "a good foundation against the time to come"—a foundation

which will be capable of sustaining the edifice they would erect. The building cannot be reared in strength and beauty, without it rests on a secure "corner-stone." The harvest cannot be gathered unless the seed is first cast into the ground. A wise Providence has so ordered it that success, prosperity, and happiness through life, and a respected and "green old age," are to be enjoyed only by careful preparation, prudent forecast, and assiduous culture, in the earlier periods of our existence.

"True wisdom, early sought and gained,
In age will give thee rest;
O then improve the morn of life,
To make its evening blest."

The youthful live much in the future. They are fond of gazing into its unknown depths, and of endeavoring to trace the outline, at least, of the fortunes that await them. With ardent hope, with eager expectation, they anticipate the approach of coming years—confident they will bring to them naught but unalloyed felicity. But they

should allow their anticipations of the future to be controlled by a well-balanced judgment, and moderated by the experience of those who have gone before them.

In looking to the future, there is one important inquiry which the young should put to their own hearts:—What do I most desire to become in mature life? What position am I anxious to occupy in society? What is the estimation in which I wish to be held by those within the circle of my acquaintance?

The answer to these inquiries, from the great mass of young people, can well be anticipated. There are none among them who desire to be disrespected and shunned by the wise and good—who are anxious to be covered with disgrace and infamy—who seek to be outcasts and vagabonds in the world. The thought that they were doomed to such a condition, would fill them with alarm. Every discreet youth will exclaim—"Nothing would gratify me more than to be honored and respected, as I advance in years; to

move in good society; to have people seek my company, rather than shun it; to be looked up to as an example for others to imitate, and to enjoy the confidence of all around me."

Is not this the desire of the young of this large audience? Surely there can be none here so blind to the future, so lost to their own good, as to prefer a life of infamy and its ever-accompanying wretchedness, to respectability, prosperity, and true enjoyment? But how are these to be obtained? Respectability, prosperity, the good opinion of community, do not come simply at our bidding. We cannot reach forth our hands and take them, as we pluck the ripe fruit from the bending branch. Neither will wishing or hoping for them shower their blessings upon us. If we would obtain and *enjoy* them, we must *labor* for them—EARN them. They are only secured as the well-merited reward of a pure and useful life!

The first thing to be aimed at by the young, should be the establishment of a

GOOD CHARACTER. In all their plans, anticipations, and prospects for future years, this should form the grand starting-point!—the chief corner-stone! It should be the foundation of every hope and thought of prosperity and happiness in days to come. It is the only basis on which such a hope can mature to full fruition. A good character, established in the season of youth, becomes a rich and productive moral soil to its possessor. Planted therein, the "Tree of Life" will spring forth in a vigorous growth. Its roots will strike deep and strong, in such a soil, and draw thence the utmost vigor and fruitfulness. Its trunk will grow up in majestic proportions—its wide-spreading branches will be clothed with a green luxuriant foliage, "goodly to look upon"—the most beautiful of blossoms will in due time, blush on every twig—and at length each limb and bough shall bend beneath the rich, golden fruit, ready to drop into the hand. Beneath its grateful shade you can find rest and repose, when the heat and burden of life

come upon you. And of its delicious fruit, you can pluck and eat, and obtain refreshment and strength, when the soul becomes wearied with labor and care, or the weight of years. Would you behold such a tree? Remember it grows alone on the soil of a good reputation!! Labor to prepare such a soil.

Believe not, ye youthful, that God has made the path of virtue and religion hard and thorny. Believe not he has overhung it with dark clouds, and made it barren of fruit and beauty. Believe not that rugged rocks, and briers, and brambles, choke the way, and lacerate the limbs of those who would walk therein! No! he has made it a smooth and peaceful path—an easy and pleasant way.—"Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The young who overlook these considerations—who lay their plans, and cherish their expectations, in reference to their future career, without any regard to the importance of a good character—who, in marking out

their course, lose sight of the necessity of laboring to establish a worthy reputation to *commence* with—who, in building their hopes of success and happiness, are not convinced that "a good name" is the only foundation on which such hopes can legitimately rest—have commenced wrong. They have made a radical and lamentable MISTAKE at the outset. A mistake, which, unless speedily corrected, will prove most disastrous in all its influences, and be keenly felt and deplored throughout life.

Those who fall into error on this point, who view a good reputation as a matter of no moment—well enough if you can secure it without much trouble, but not worth laboring for, with zeal and perseverance—have placed themselves in a most critical position. They are like a ship in the midst of the wide wastes of ocean, without chart compass, or rudder, liable to be turned hither and thither by every fickle wind that blows, and dashed upon dangerous reefs by the heaving billows. Failing to see the impor-

tance of establishing a good character, they fall easy victims to sinful temptations, and, ere long, verging farther and farther from the path of rectitude, they at length find every fond hope, every fair prospect, blasted for life.

To a young man, a good character is the best *capital* he can possess, to start with in life. It is much better, and far more to be depended on than gold. Although money may aid in establishing a young man in business, under favorable circumstances, yet without a good character he cannot succeed. His want of reputation will undermine the best advantages, and failure, and ruin, will, sooner or later, overtake him with unerring certainty ! !

When it is known that a young man is well-informed, industrious, attentive to business, economical, strictly temperate, and moral, a respecter of the Sabbath, the Bible, and religion, he cannot fail to obtain the good opinion and the confidence of the whole community. He will have friends on every hand, who will take pleasure in encouraging

and assisting him. The wise and good will bestow their commendation upon him; and parents will point to him as an example for their children to imitate. Blessed with health, such a youth cannot fail of success and permanent happiness.

But let it be known that a young man is ignorant or indolent, that he is neglectful of business, or dishonest; that he is given to intemperance, or disposed to visit places of dissipation, or to associate with vicious companions—and what are his prospects? With either one or more of these evil qualifications fixed upon him, he is hedged out of the path of prosperity. To cover up such characteristics for a great length of time, is a moral impossibility. Remember this, I beg you. It is beyond the power of mortals to *conceal* vicious habits and propensities for any long period. And when once *discovered*, who will repose confidence in such a youth? Who will trust him, or encourage him, or countenance him? Who will give him employment? Who will confide anything to his

oversight? Who will render him assistance in his business affairs, when he is straitened and in need of the aid of friends? Behold his prospects! How unpromising, how dark!! It is impossible for such a young man to succeed. No earthly power can confer prosperity upon him. He himself undermines his own welfare, blackens his own name, and dashes down the cup of life which a wise and good Providence has kindly placed to his lips, and calls upon him to drink.

If a good character, a spotless reputation, is all-essential to the prosperity of a young man, what must it not be to a young woman? A well-established character for morality and virtue is of great importance to people of every class, and in all circumstances. But to a young lady, a "good name" is a priceless jewel. It is everything—literally, EVERYTHING—to her. It will give her an attraction, a value, an importance, in the estimation of others, which nothing else can impart.

In possession of a spotless character, she may reasonably hope for peace and happiness. But without such a character, she is *nothing!* Youth, beauty, dress, accomplishments, all gifts and qualities will be looked upon as naught, when tainted by a suspicious reputation! Nothing can atone for this, nothing can be allowed to take its place, nothing can give charm and attraction where it exists. When the character of a young woman is gone—all is gone! Thenceforward she can look for naught else but degradation and wretchedness.

The reputation of a young woman is of the most delicate texture. It requires not overt acts of actual wickedness to tarnish its brightness, and cast suspicion on its purity. Indiscreet language, careless deportment, a want of discrimination in regard to associates, even when no evil is done, or intended, will often bring into question her character, greatly to her injury. Many are the instances where a single word, spoken at random, in the giddy thoughtlessness of youthful vivacity,

without the slighest thought of wrong, has cast a shadow upon the character of a young woman which it required years to efface. How important that every word uttered, and every deed performed, should be maturely weighed. A discreet lady will not only be careful to avoid evil itself, but will studiously refrain from everything which has even the appearance of evil.

> "Whatever dims thy sense of truth,
> Or stains thy purity,
> Though light as breath of summer air,
> Count it as sin to thee."

Young women frequently err in their understanding of what it is that gives them a good name, and imparts their chief attraction. Many seem to imagine that good looks, a gay attire, in the extreme of fashion, and a few showy attainments, constitute everything essential to make them interesting and attractive, and to establish a high reputation in the estimation of the other sex. Hence they seek for no other attainments. In this, they make a radical mistake. The

charms contained in these qualities, are very shallow, very worthless, and very uncertain. There can no dependence be placed upon them.

If there is one point more than another, in this respect, where young ladies err, it is in regard to Dress. There are not a few who suppose that dress is the most important thing for which they have been created, and that it forms the highest attraction of woman. Under this mistaken notion—this poor infatuation—they plunge into every extravagance in their attire; and, in this manner, squander sums of money, which would be much more profitably expended in storing their minds with useful knowledge, or, in some cases, even in procuring the ordinary comforts of life.

There is a secret on this point I would like to divulge to young women. It is this—That any dress, which from its oddness, or its extreme of fashion and display, is calculated to attract very particular attention, is worn at the expense of the good name of its

possessor. It raises them in the estimation of none; but deprives them of the good opinion of all sensible people. It gives occasion for suspicion, not only of their good sense, but of their habits of economy. When a young woman is given to extravagant displays in dress, it is but publishing to the world, her own consciousness of a want of other attractions of a more substantial nature. It is but virtually saying, "I seek to excite attention by my dress, because I have no other good quality by which I can secure attention."

Could a young woman who passes through the streets decked out extravagantly in all that the milliner and dress-maker can furnish, realize the unfavorable impression she makes upon sensible young men—could she but see the curl of the lip, and hear the contemptuous epithet which her appearance excites, and know how utterly worthless they esteem her—she would hasten to her home, throw off her foolish attire, and weep tears of bitterness at her folly.

Parents are often much to be blamed for

this indiscretion in their daughters. They should give them better advice; and instruct them to cultivate other and worthier attractions than the poor gewgaws of DRESS! Do they not know that the worthless and abandoned of the female sex dress the most gaily and fashionably? Should they not urge their daughters to seek for a higher excellency, a more creditable distinction than this?

Here is another secret for young ladies:—All the attraction they can ever possess by means of dress, will be derived from three sources, viz. Plainness, Neatness, and Appropriateness. In whatever they deviate from these cardinal points, they will to the same degree make themselves ridiculous—weaken their influence, and lose the good opinion of those they are the most anxious to win. I beg these truths to be impressed deeply on the mind.

Dress, personal beauty, and showy accomplishments, go but a short way to establish the reputation on which the happiness of

woman really depends. Instead of placing reliance on these, they should seek to cultivate those qualities, habits, and dispositions, which will give permanent merit and value, in the estimation of those whose attention and regard they are desirous to cultivate. A sweet and gentle disposition—a mild and forgiving temper—a respectful and womanly demeanor—a mind cultivated, and well-stored with useful knowledge—a thorough practical acquaintance with all domestic duties; (the sphere where woman can exhibit her highest attractions, and her most valuable qualities,) tastes, habits, and views of life, drawn not from the silly novels of the day, but from a discriminating judgment, and the school of a well-learned practical experience in usefulness and goodness:—these are the elements of a good name, a valuable reputation in a young woman. They are more to be sought for, and more to be depended upon, than any outward qualification. They form an attraction which will win the regard and affection of the wise and enlight-

ened, where the fascinations of dress, and other worthless accomplishments, would prove utterly powerless.

I desire the young, of both sexes, to remember that it is one thing not to have a bad reputation, but quite another thing to have a good one. The fact that an individual does nothing criminal, or offensive, although creditable in itself considered, does not bestow the amount of merit after which all should seek. They may do nothing particularly bad, and nothing very good. It is meritorious to refrain from evil; but it is better still to achieve something by active exertion, which shall deserve commendation. The Apostle exhorts us not only to "cease to do evil," but to "learn to do well." The young, while striving to avoid the evils of a bad reputation, should assiduously seek for the advantages of a good one.

How can the young secure a good character? Its worth, its importance, its blessings, we have seen. Now, how can it be obtained? This is a question, worthy the serious con-

sideration of every youth. Let me say in reply:—

1. That a good character cannot be *inherited*, as the estate of a father descends to his heirs. However respectable and worthy parents may be, their children cannot share in that respect, unless they deserve it by their own merits. Too many youth, it is to be apprehended, are depending upon their parents' reputation as well as their parents' property, for their own standing and success in life. This is an insecure foundation. In our republican land, every individual is estimated by his or her own conduct, and not by the reputation of their connections. It is undoubtedly an advantage in many points of view, for a young person to have respectable parents. But if they would inherit their parents' good name, they must imitate their parents' virtues.

2. A good character cannot be purchased with gold. Though a man or a woman may have all the wealth of the Indies, yet it cannot secure a worthy name—it cannot buy

the esteem of the wise and good, without the merit which deserves it. The glitter of gold cannot conceal an evil and crabbed disposition, a selfish soul, a corrupt heart, or vile passions and propensities. Although the sycophantic may fawn around such as possess wealth, and bow obsequiously before them, on account of their riches, yet, in fact, they are despised and contemned in the hearts even of their hangers-on and followers.

3. A good character cannot be obtained by simply wishing for it. The Creator has wisely provided, that the desire for a thing does not secure it. Were it to be thus, our world would soon present a strange aspect. It is, undoubtedly, much better that it should be as it is. We have the privilege to wish for whatever we please; but we can secure only that which we labor for and deserve. Were the traveller to stand throughout the day, at the foot of the hill, wishing to be at the summit, his simple desire would not place him there. He must allow his wishes to prompt him to proper exertion. It is only

by persevering industry, and patient toil, contented to take one step at a time, that his wish is gratified, and he finds himself at length upon the brow of the eminence.

In like manner, the youthful, to obtain possession of a good character, must earn it. It must be sought for, by an earnest cultivation of all the graces and virtues, which are commended by God and man. It cannot be secured in a moment. As the edifice is erected by diligently laying one stone upon another, until it finally becomes a splendid temple, piercing the heavens with its glittering spire, so a good name must be built up by good deeds, faithfully and constantly performed, as day after day carries us along amid the affairs of life.

Let the youthful fix their eyes upon this prize of a good reputation—the only end worth striving for in life. Let them studiously avoid evil practices, corrupt associates, and vicious examples. Let them patiently and faithfully lay the foundations of virtuous habits, and practise the lessons of wisdom

and the precepts of religion—and in due time the prize shall be theirs. The spotless wreath of a virtuous character shall rest upon their brow. The commendation, the confidence, and the good-will of man shall accompany them; and the choicest of the blessings of God shall rest upon them, and sweeten all their days.

LECTURE II.

The Principles and Purposes of Life.

"The heart of him that hath understanding, seeketh knowledge."—Prov. xv. 14.

THE practical wisdom of Solomon is seen in this simple precept. The youthful, who have the slightest understanding of the journey of life—who have been impressed, even in the smallest degree, with the perils to which they are exposed; the trials to be endured; the vicissitudes through which they must necessarily pass; the obstacles they must overcome; the deceptions and allurements they will have to detect and withstand—cannot fail

to acknowledge the wisdom of seeking for knowledge to enlighten and prepare for the exigencies which await the inexperienced traveller through this world's wayward scenes.

Those who commence their career without forethought, or discrimination in regard to the moral principles by which they will be governed, and without selecting the best and safest path of the many which open before them, are involved in a blindness of the most pitiable description. They would not manifest this want of discretion on matters of much less importance. The commander of the ship does not venture his voyage to sea without his compass, his chart, and a full supply of stores. We would not sail an hour with him, if we believed him ignorant or indifferent to the necessity of these important preparations. How hazardous, how foolish the youth who launches away on the momentous voyage of life, without compass, or chart, or any preparation which extends beyond the present moment. True, the ship

destitute of all these essentials, may leave the harbor in safety, with her gay pennons flying, her swelling sails filled with a favorable breeze, a smiling sun above, a smooth sea beneath, and all the outward indications of a prosperous voyage. But follow her a few hours. The terrific storm-king spreads abroad his misty pinions, and goes forth in fury, ploughing up the waters into mountain billows, and shrieking for his prey. The gloomy night settles down upon the bosom of the mighty deep, and spreads its dark pall over sea and sky. Muttering thunders stun the ear, and the lightning's vivid flash lights up the terrific scene, and reveals all its indescribable horrors. Where now is the gay ship which ventured forth without needful preparation? Behold her, tossed to and fro by the angry waves. All on board are in alarm! The fierce winds drive her on, they know not whither. Hark to that fearful roar! It is the fatal breakers! Hard up the helm! Put the ship about! See, on every hand frowns the fatal lee-shore! Pull taught

each rope—spread every sail. It is in vain! Throw out the anchors! Haste! strain every nerve! Alas! *It is all too late.* The danger cannot be escaped. On drifts the fated craft. Now she mounts the crest of an angry wave, which hurries forward with its doomed burthen. Now she dashes against the craggy points of massive rocks, and sinks into the raging deep. One loud, terrific wail is heard, and all is silent! On the rising of the morrow's sun, the spectator beholds the beach and the neighboring waters strewn with broken masts, rent sails, and drifting fragments—all that remains of the proud ship which yesterday floated so gaily on the ocean waters!!

Behold, O ye youthful, a picture of the fate of those who rush upon the career of life, without forethought or preparation, and without the light of well-selected moral principles to guide them. All may appear fair and promising at the outset, and for a season. But before many years can elapse, the prospects of such youth must be overclouded;

and ere long disappointment, overthrow, disgrace and ruin, will be the closing scenes of a life, commenced in so much blindness.

"Well begun is half done," was one of Dr. Franklin's sound maxims. A career well begun—a life commenced properly, with wise forecast, with prudent rules of action, and under the influence of sound and pure, moral and religious principles—is an advance, halfway at least, to ultimate success and prosperity. Such a commencement will not, it is true, insure you against the misfortunes which are incident to earthly existence. But if persevered in, it will guard you against the long catalogue of evils, vexatious penalties and wretchedness, which are the certain fruit of a life of immorality; and will bestow upon you all the real enjoyments, within the earthly reach of man.

As people advance in years, they perceive more and more the importance of commencing life properly.

See that wretched outcast! Poor and miserable, shunned by all but depraved asso-

ciates, he drags out the worthless remnant of his days. Does he think he has acted wisely? Hark to his soliloquy—"Oh, could I begin life again—could I but live my days over once more—how different the course I would pursue. Instead of rushing on blindly and heedlessly, without forethought or care, and allowing myself to become an easy prey to temptation and sin, I would reflect maturely, and choose wisely, the path for my footsteps. Faithfully would I search for the way of virtue, honesty, sobriety, and goodness, and strictly would I walk therein!" The opportunity he so eagerly covets, and to obtain which he would deem no sacrifice too great, is now before every youth in the assembly.

This thought is beautifully elaborated in the following allegory:

"It was midnight of the new year, and an aged man stood thoughtfully at the window. He gazed with a long, despairing look, upon the fixed, eternal, and glorious heaven, and down upon the silent, still, and snow-white

earth, whereon was none so joyless, so sleepless as he. For his grave stood open near him; it was covered only with the snows of age, not decked with the green of youth; and he brought with him, from a long and rich life, nothing save errors, crimes, and sickness—a wasted body, a desolate soul, a breast filled with poison, and an old age heavy with repentance and sorrow. The fair days of his youth at this hour, arose like spectres before his mind, and carried him back to the bright morning, when his father had first planted him at the starting-point of life; whence, to the right, the way conducts along the sunny path of virtue, to a wide and peaceful land, a land of light, rich in the harvest of good deeds, and full of the joy of angels; whilst, to the left, the road descends to the molehills of vice, toward a dark cavern, full of poisonous droppings, stinging serpents, and dank and steaming mists.

"The serpents clung around his breast, and the drops of poison lay upon his tongue, and he knew not where he was.

"Senseless and in unutterable anguish, his cry went forth to heaven: 'Grant me but youth again! O, father, place me but once again upon the starting-point of life, that I may choose otherwise!'

"But his father and his youth were far away. He beheld wandering lights dance upon the marshes, and disappear upon the graveyards; and he exclaimed, 'These are my days of folly!'

"He beheld a star shoot through the heaven, and vanish: it glimmered as it fell, and disappeared upon the earth. 'Such, too, am I!' whispered his bleeding heart; and the serpent-tooth of remorse struck afresh into its wounds.

"His heated fancy pictured to him night-wandering forms slow-creeping upon the house-tops; the windmill raised its arm, and threatened to fell him to the earth; and in the tenantless house of death, the only remaining mask assumed imperceptibly his own features.

"At once, in the midst of this delirium,

the sounds from the steeple, welcoming the new year, fell upon his ear, like distant church music.

"He was moved, but to a gentler mood. He gazed around, unto the horizon, and looked forth upon the wide earth; and he thought of the friends of his youth, who, happier and better than he, were now teachers upon the earth, fathers of happy children, and blessed each in his condition.

"'Alas! and I, too, like ye, might now be sleeping peacefully and tearless through this first night of the year, had I willed so! I too might have been happy, ye dear parents, had I fulfilled your new-year's wishes and admonitions!'

"In the feverish reminiscences of his youth, it seemed to him as if the mask which had assumed his features in the house of death arose, and grew into a living youth, and his former blooming figure stood before him in the bitter mockery of illusion.

"He could look no longer; he hid his eyes, a flood of hot tears streamed forth and

were lost in the snow. And he sighed, now more gently, and despairing, 'Return but again, O youth, come once again!'

"And youth did return; for he had but dreamed thus fearfully in the new-year's night. He was still young; but his sinful wanderings, they had been no dream; and he thanked God that he could yet turn from the miry ways of vice, and again choose the sunny path which leadeth unto the pure land of the harvest of righteousness.

"Turn thou with him, young man, if thou standest upon his path of error. This fearful dream will in a future be thy judge; but shouldst thou ever exclaim, in the bitterness of remorse, 'Return, fair time of youth!'—youth will not come when thou dost call for her."

It is much easier to start right and keep right, than to start wrong, and then endeavor to get right. Although those who take the wrong path at the commencement, should afterwards seek to obtain the right one, and persevere until they find it, still the labor to

retrieve the early error will be difficult. It is painful to walk in the way of wickedness —it is painful to break away from it, when once there. It is painful to continue on—it is painful to turn back. This is in consequence of the *nature* of sin. It is a path all evil, all pain, all darkness—everything connected with it is fruitful of wretchedness. Those who stray therein, find themselves beset with perils and troubles on all sides. Avoid it, as you love happiness!

"Ne'er till to-morrow's light delay
What may as well be done to-day;
Ne'er do to-day, what on the morrow
Will wring your heart with sighs and sorrow."

A young man may, in early life, fall into vicious habits, and afterwards turn from them. Some have done so. But they declare that the struggles they were compelled to make—the conflicts and trials, the buffeting of evil passions, and the mental agony they endured, in breaking away, were terrible beyond description. Where one, who

has fallen into bad habits in youth, has afterwards abandoned them, there are a score who have continued their victims, until ruin, and a premature death, closed their career. How much safer, how much easier and pleasanter, how much more promising and hopeful, to commence life with good habits well established, with high principles, sound maxims, enlightened rules of conduct, deeply fixed in the soul. This is a plain, pleasant, prosperous path—readily found, and easily followed. In no other can you secure true enjoyment.

> "We cannot live too slowly to be good
> And happy, nor too much by line and square.
> But youth is burning to forestall its nature,
> And will not wait for time to ferry it
> Over the stream; but flings itself into
> The flood and perishes. * * * * * * *
> The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat
> Oneself. * * * * * * * * * * * * *"

There is nothing more essential to the young than to accustom themselves to mature reflection, and practical observation, in regard to the duties of life, and the sources of human enjoyment. This is a task, how-

ever, which but few of the youthful are inclined to undertake. The most of them are averse to giving up their thoughts to sober meditation on the consequences which accrue from different courses of conduct, or to practical observation on the lessons taught by the experience of others. The Present!—the Present!—its amusements, its gayeties, its fashions, absorbs nearly all their thoughts. They have little relish to look towards the future, except to anticipate the continuance of the novelty and joyousness of the spring-time of life. The poet utters a most salutary admonition in his beautiful lines:

"The beam of the morning, the bud of the Spring,
The promise of beauty and brightness may bring;
But clouds gather darkness, and touched by the frost,
The pride of the plant, and the morning are lost.
Thus the bright and the beautiful ever decay—
Life's morn and life's flowers, oh, they quick pass away!"

I would not cast one unnecessary shadow on the pathway of the young; but they should be often reminded, that the season of youth, with its romance and light-hearted-

ness, soon, too soon, departs! Spring, with its budding beauties, and fragrant blossoms, does not continue all the year. It is speedily followed by the fervid summer, the mature and sober autumn, and the dreary snows of winter. In order to have thriving and promising fields in summer, rich and abundant harvests in autumn, and bountiful supplies for comfort and repose in winter, "good seed" must be sowed in the spring. So, also, if you would have the summer of life fruitful of prosperity—its autumn yield a rich and bountiful harvest, and the winter of old age made comfortable and peaceful—the good seed of pure habits, and sound moral and religious principles, must be carefully sowed in the rich soil of the heart, in the budding spring-time of youth.

Due observation and reflection will enable the young to sow the right kind of seed at the right time. There is much in this. Those who sow late will be likely to have their harvest blighted by chilling rains and nipping frosts. The earlier the seed is cast into

the ground, the greater the certainty that it will produce an abundant crop. Reflection and discrimination are all-essential to the youthful. Those who think deeply will act wisely. They will detect and avoid the dangers which beset their pathway, and into which the thoughtless so easily fall. They will readily penetrate the specious appearance, the harmless aspect, the deceptive veil, which vice and immorality can so readily assume. They will understand the old maxim, that "all is not gold that glitters." This is a simple truth, and yet how few of the young practise upon it. See this young man. How easily he gives way to temptation—how readily he is led astray. Why does he thus turn aside from virtue's path? Why thus trample upon the affectionate counsel and admonition of wise parents and kind friends? Ah! he sees a glittering bauble in the way of sin, and imagines it is the shining of the gold of true and solid happiness. Eagerly he presses on to secure the prize. He plunges into the wickedness to

which it tempts him—he seizes the dazzling treasure, and finds—what? Pure gold?—true delight?—unalloyed happiness? Alas, foolish youth! No! That which he took for the glitter of gold, proves to be worthless ashes in his hand. And the high pleasure he was anticipating, results in naught but disappointment, disgrace, wretchedness.

> "Teach me the flattering paths to shun,
> In which the thoughtless many run;
> Who for a shade the substance miss,
> And grasp their ruin in their bliss."

A well-established habit of practical observation, enables the youthful to guard against the mistakes of conduct, into which others have fallen, and to make the shortcomings of their fellow-beings, salutary admonitions for their own instruction. When thoughtful, observing young persons, see an individual do a mean, unmanly action, they will reflect much upon it. They will notice how contemptible it makes him appear—how it degrades him in the estimation of the honorable and high-minded—how it belittles

him in the view of society at large—and how unworthy it makes him appear even in his own eyes. These observations, if faithfully made, will guard them against like acts themselves.

When they behold one arraigned at the bar of public justice, to answer to the offended laws of his country, they will make it a salutary lesson of instruction. They will realize the deceptive and ruinous nature of wrong-doing—how, while promising them the very elixir of happiness, it pours naught but bitterness and poison into the cup of life, entailing degradation and wretchedness upon its victims. They will become satisfied of the solemn truth of the words of the Most High, that "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

When they see neighbors, who might promote each other's enjoyments, by living peaceably together, fall out in regard to some trivial misunderstanding, and engage in angry disputes, and a bitter warfare, disturbing the harmony of the neighborhood,

and destroying their own happiness—the young who exercise practical observation, will be instructed, to avoid similar troubles in their own affairs. They will realize the folly and blindness of such a course, and the necessity of exercising a forbearing and forgiving spirit, and the wisdom of submitting to injuries, if need be, rather than to become involved in angry recriminations and hostilities.

Thus by a constant habit of observation and reflection, the youthful can turn the failings of others to their own account. As the industrious bee extracts honey from the most nauseous substances, so can the thoughtful and observing draw instruction not only from the example of the wise, but from the folly of the wicked!

In preparations for future usefulness and success, the young should establish certain fixed principles of moral conduct, by which they will be steadfastly governed in all their intercourse with the world. Without some well-defined landmarks, by which they can

be guided in emergencies, when everything depends on the course of conduct to be pursued, they will be in imminent peril. Temptations are strewed along the pathway of the young, and assail them at every turn. If they could clearly contemplate the effects of giving way to temptation—were all the unhappy consequences to stand out visibly before them—they would never be induced to turn aside into sin. Could the young man as he is tempted to quaff the fashionable glass of intoxicating beverage, see plainly the ignominious life, the poverty and wretchedness, and the horrid death by delirium tremens, to which it so often leads, he would set it down untasted, and turn away in alarm. But it is the nature of temptation to blind and deceive the unwary, and lead them into sin, by false representations of the happiness to be derived from it. Hence the young need to establish, in their calm, cool moments, when under the influence of mature judgment and enlightened discretion, certain fixed rules of conduct, by which they will be governed,

and on which they will depend in every hour of temptation.

One of the first and most important rules of life which should be established by the youthful, is the constant cultivation of purity of heart. This is the great safeguard of the young. It is their brightest jewel—their most attractive ornament—the crowning glory of their character and being. It adds a captivating lustre to all charms of whatever description; and without it all other excellencies are lost in perpetual darkness. It should be a fixed rule, never to violate the dictates of purity either in action, language, or thought. Many imagine it is a matter of small moment what their thoughts may be, so long as in action they do not transgress the requirements of virtue. This, however, is a serious error. The outward action is but the expression of the inward thought. Wicked deeds would never have birth, were they not first prompted by wicked desires. Hence if the young would have their words and deeds characterized by purity, they must

see that their hearts and thoughts are constantly pure.

> "Pure thoughts are angel visitants! Be such
> The frequent inmates of thy guileless breast.
> They hallow all things by their sacred touch,
> And ope the portals of the land of rest."

The heart is the source of all actions. A dark, muddy fountain cannot send forth clear waters. Neither does a pure fountain send forth muddy waters. A foul heart, the receptacle of unclean thoughts and impure passions, is a corrupt well-spring of action, which leads to every vicious practice. Let the hearts of the youthful be pure as crystal, let their thoughts be sanctified by virtue and holiness; and their lives shall be as white and spotless as the driven snow—winning the admiration of all who know them. With purity as a shield, they are doubly guarded against sin. However enticing temptation may be—however artfully or strongly it may assail them—they are prepared to rise above it, in any and every emergency.

Another of the fixed rules of conduct should be to *aim high* in all the *purposes* of life. The great obstacle to success with many of the young, is, that they adopt no standard of action for their government; but allow themselves to float along the current of time like a mere straw on the surface of the waters, liable to be veered about by every puff of wind and whirling eddy. If the current in which they float happens to waft them into the smooth waters, and the calm sunshine of virtue and respectability, it is a matter of mere fortunate chance. If they are drawn into the dark stream of sin, they have but little power to resist, and are soon hurried into the surging rapids, and hurled over the boiling cataract of ruin! True, they may not utterly perish even in plunging down the cataract. They may possibly seize hold of some jutting rock below, and by a desperate effort drag themselves from the raging waters. But they will come forth bruised, bleeding, strangling, and half-drowned, to mourn the folly of their thoughtlessness. How much

wiser and better to have taken early precaution, and guarded in the first place against the insidious current, which compelled them to purchase wisdom at so dear a rate.

To avoid this great folly, the youthful should establish a fixed purpose for life. They should set their mark, as to what they wish to become; and then make it the great labor of their lives to attain it. And let that mark be a high one. You cannot make it too elevated. The maxim of the ancients was, that although he who aims at the sun will not hit it, yet his arrows will fly much higher than though his mark was on the earth. A young man who should strive to be a second Washington or Jefferson, might not attain to their renown. But he would become a much greater and better man, than though he had only aspired to be the keeper of a gambling-house, or the leader of a gang of blacklegs. In all your purposes and plans of life, aim high!

"Again a light boat on a streamlet is seen,
Where the banks are o'erladen with beautiful green,

Like a mantle of velvet spread out to the sight,
Reflects to the gazer a bright world of light.
The fair bark has lost none of its beauty of yore,
But a youth is within it,—the fair child before;
And the Angel is gone—on the shore see him stand,
As he bids him adieu with a wave of the hand.
Ah! a life is before thee—a life full of care,
Gentle Youth, and mayhap thou wilt fall in its snare.
Can thy bark speed thee now? without wind, without tide?
Without the kind Angel, thy beautiful guide?
Ah! no;—then what lures thee, fair youth, to depart?
Must thou rush into danger from impulse of heart?
Lo! above in the 'bright arch of Heaven' I see
The vision, the aim so alluring to thee:
'Tis the temple of Fame, with its pillars so fair,
And the Genius of Wisdom and Love reigneth there.
Advance then, proud vessel,—thy burden is light,—
Swift speed thee, and guide his young steps in the right;
For in life's 'fitful changes' are many dark streams,
And paths unillumed by the sun's golden beams."

Cherish self-respect. Have a deep regard for your own estimation of your own merits. Look with scorn and contempt upon low and vicious practices. Cultivate pride of character. I care not how proud the youthful are of all their valuable attainments, their correct habits, their excellings in that which is manly, useful, and good. The more pride of this description, the better. Though it should reach even to egotism and vanity, it is much

better than no pride in these things. This pride in doing right is one of the preserving ingredients, the very salt of man's moral character, which prevents from plunging into vice.

Live for something besides *self*. Build with your own hands the monument that shall perpetuate your memory, when the dust has claimed your body. Do good. Live for others, if you would be embalmed in their recollections.

"Thousands of men breathe, move, and live—pass off the stage of life, and are heard of no more. Why! They did not a particle of good in the world; and none were blessed by them; none could point to them as the instruments of their redemption; not a line they wrote, not a word they spoke could be recalled, and so they perished; their light went out in darkness, and they were not remembered more than the insects of yesterday. Will you thus live and die, O man immortal? Live for something. Do good, and leave behind

you a monument of virtue that the storm of time can never destroy. Write your name by kindness, love, and mercy, on the hearts of the thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your name—your deeds—will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind, as the stars on the brow of evening. Good deeds will shine as brightly on the earth as the stars of heaven." *

"Up! it is a glorious era!
Never yet has dawned its peer!
Up, and work! and then a nobler
In the future shall appear.
'Onward!' is the present's motto,
To a larger, higher life;
'Onward!' though the march be weary,
Though unceasing be the strife.

Pitch not here thy tent, for higher
Doth the bright ideal shine,
And the journey is not ended
Till thou reach that height divine.
Upward! and above earth's vapors,
Glimpses shall to thee be given,
And the fresh and odorous breezes,
Of the very hills of heaven."

* Dr. Chalmers.

Among the fixed principles which you should establish for your government, by no means overlook *Honesty* and *Integrity*. The poet never uttered a truer word than that

"An honest man 's the noblest work of God."

Honesty is approved and admired by God and man—by all in heaven, and by all on earth. Even the corrupt swindler, in his heart, respects an honest man, and stands abashed in his presence.

In all your actions, in all your dealings, let strict and rigid honesty guide you. Never be tempted to swerve from its dictates, even in the most trivial degree. There will be strong allurements to entice you from this path. The appetite for gain—the voice of avarice—will often whisper that honesty may be violated to advantage. There will be times when it will seem that its dictates may be placed aside—that a little dishonesty will be greatly to your benefit. Believe not this syren song. This is the time you are in the most danger of being deceived to your

serious injury. Although there may be occasions when you will seem actually to lose by adhering to honesty, yet you should not shrink a hair's breadth. Whatever you may lose, in a pecuniary point of view, at any time, by a strict submission to honesty, you will make up an hundred-fold in the long-run, by establishing and preserving a reputation for integrity. Looking at it in simply a pecuniary point of view, community will give their countenance, their patronage, and business, much quicker to a man who has established a reputation for honesty, than to one who is known, or suspected of being fraudulent in his dealings. Every consideration which can bear upon the young, religious, moral and pecuniary, unite to urge them to establish, in the outset of life, the rule of unswerving *honesty* and *integrity*, as their constant guide. Let it not be forgotten, that in every possible point of view, and in every conceivable condition of things, it will always be true, that "Honesty is the best policy."

I would have the young also cultivate and

establish as a fixed rule of life, a friendly and accommodating disposition. This is all-essential to make their days pleasant and happy. Other virtues will influence the world to respect you; but an affectionate disposition will cause those with whom you have intercourse, to love you. Those who wish the friendship and good will of others, must themselves manifest a friendly disposition, and a spirit of kindness. Whoever would be accommodated and assisted, must themselves be accommodating, and ready to aid those who require it. In all these things we see the wisdom of the Saviour's *golden rule*—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Be kind, accommodating, loving, and peaceful, in the whole current of your disposition, and the cup of your life will be sweetened with peace and joy.

I exhort the young to adopt the noble motto of the coat-of-arms of New York—"Excelsior!"

"The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
EXCELSIOR!"

Let it be the aim of every youth to lift aloft this glorious banner, and soar *upward* to a surpassing excellency. Let them seek to *excel* in all things high and good. Let them never stoop to do an evil act, nor degrade themselves to commit a wrong. But in their principles, purposes, deeds, and words, let their great characteristics be Truth, Goodness, and Usefulness!

"Be just and fear not!
Let all the ends thou aim'st at, be thy country's,
Thy God's, and Truth's!"

LECTURE III.

Selection of Associates.

"Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them; for their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief."—Prov. xxiv. 1, 2.

THERE is nothing more important to the youthful, or that should receive more serious consideration at their hands, than the selection of Associates. We are by nature social beings. We desire, we seek, and enjoy, the society of our fellow-creatures. This trait is strongly developed in the young. They yearn for each other's companionship, and they must have it, or they pine away, and sink into misanthropy. This disposition may properly

be indulged; but great care and prudence should be exercised in regard to it.

While mingling in each other's society, it is natural, almost unavoidable, that the youthful should imbibe much of the leading characteristics of their associates. Being highly imitative in our nature, it is impossible to be on social and familiar terms with others, for any great length of time, without copying somewhat of their dispositions, ways, and habits.

Let a young man, however upright and pure, associate habitually with those who are profane, Sabbath-breaking, intemperate, and unprincipled—who are given to gambling, licentiousness, and every low, brutal and wicked practice—and but a brief space of time will elapse before he will fall into like habits himself, and become as great an adept in iniquitous proceedings as the most thorough-paced profligate among them. When a young woman associates with girls who are idle, disrespectful and disobedient to parents—who are vulgar, brazen-faced, loud talkers and

laughers—whose chief occupation and delight is to spin street-yarn, to run from house to house and store to store, and walk the streets in the evening, instead of being at home engaged in some useful occupation—whose whole conversation, and thoughts, and dreams, relate to dress, and fashion, and gewgaws, and trinkets, to adorn the person, utterly negligent of the ornaments of the mind and heart—whose reading never extends to instructive and useful books, but is confined exclusively to sickly novels and silly love-stories;—how long will it be before she will become as careless and good-for-nothing as they?

This predisposition of the young to imitate the characteristics of those with whom they associate, has been so well and so long known, that it has given rise to the old proverb—"Show me your company, and I will show you your character." So perfectly did Solomon understand this, that he uttered the wise maxim—"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou

shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."

The young should remember, that people will judge them by the company they keep. This principle is perfectly correct. In selecting their associates, they act *voluntarily*. They choose such as they please. When they seek the society of the ignorant, the vulgar, the profane and profligate, they give the best of reasons for believing that they prefer profligacy and vulgarity to virtue and purity. To what other conclusion can the observer come? If they preferred virtue and purity, they would certainly seek pure and virtuous associates. Hence society have adopted the very correct principle of judging the young by the character of their associates. If they would be thought well of, they should strive to associate with those who are known to be virtuous and good. However blameless and upright young persons may have been, if they begin to associate with those whose reputation is poor, and whose conduct is improper, they will soon

be esteemed no higher than their companions.

These reflections show the youthful how important it is, that their associates should be of the right stamp. They should see the necessity of *selecting* their companions. The great difficulty with the young is, that they leave this important matter altogether too much to "chance." If they happen to fall into good company, it is very well; and their associates and intimate friends will be likely to be of that class. But if, unfortunately, they meet with the vicious and unprincipled, and are, to any great extent, thrown in their way, they are as likely to form intimacies with them as with any others.

Such negligence is exceedingly unpromising and dangerous. Whoever allows it, will be in far more danger of falling under the influence of the vicious than the exemplary. Instead of this heedlessness, they should carefully and thoughtfully *select* their associates. They should not be willing to form

terms of intimacy with every one into whose society they may be casually thrown. They should inform themselves of their tastes, habits, and reputation. And from the circle of their acquaintance should choose those with whom they would form terms of intimacy.

Be cautious to select aright. The entire career in after-life depends very much on this. How many a young woman of fine attractions has had her reputation injured, and her prospects for life destroyed, by associating with those whose character and habits proved to be bad. When once young women get a taint on their reputation in this way, or in any other manner, it is exceedingly difficult to wipe it out.

The ruin of multitudes of young men can be traced to the same origin—a bad selection of associates. I have in my mind's eye now, a case in point. A young man, born in this city, and known to most of you, was naturally endowed with the rarest abilities and the finest talents. He belonged to one of the most wealthy and respectable families.

He had every advantage for cultivation, and for the highest and most thorough education. Had he been thoughtful and wise to have improved his opportunities, the way was open for him to the highest advancement. He might have been blessed with respectability, wealth, and honors. He could have risen to the most dignified positions in life. His voice might have been heard in strains of persuasive eloquence, from the sacred pulpit, or in the halls of justice, or in the senate chamber of our state or national councils. He might have occupied a seat on the bench of the highest courts, or have aspired to the executive chair of the nation. But where is he now, and what are his circumstances and his position in the world? See issuing from the door of yonder filthy groggery, a wretched specimen of humanity—the distorted caricature of a man! His garments are threadbare and patched—his eyes are inflamed, sunken and watery—his countenance bloated and livid—his limbs swelled and tottering. Although but in the morning of his

manhood, yet the lines of premature old age and decrepitude are deeply carved upon his pale, dejected face; and in his whole aspect, there is that forlorn, broken-spirited, anguished look of despair, which shows he himself feels that he has sunken, beyond earthly redemption, into the awful pit of the confirmed drunkard! This is the young man whose early opportunities were so favorable, and whose prospects were so bright and flattering. He has become a curse to himself. He has brought disgrace and wretchedness on his connections, and is an outcast and vagabond, with whom no young man who now hears me would associate for a single hour!

What has brought him to this pitiable condition—this state of utter wretchedness? It was a want of forethought. He totally neglected the considerations I have endeavored to impress upon the young. He was careless and indifferent in regard to his associates. He would not be admonished to turn from the company of the vicious, and seek

the society of those of good habits and upright character. Despite the counsel of parents and friends, he would associate with companions of corrupt habits—with the profane, the drinking, the Sabbath-breaking—those whose chief delight was to visit oyster-cellars and grog-shops—whose highest ambition was to excel in cards, and dice, and sleight-of-hand tricks—and who sought for no better employment than to range the streets and alleys, to engage in midnight adventures and Bacchanalian revelries. Mingling with such as his associates, and falling unavoidably into their habits, he is now reaping the *bitter*, BITTER fruits of his folly. His time misspent—character destroyed—health ruined—every source of happiness obliterated—his life wasted and literally thrown away—his days, a *blank*—ah! *worse* than that—filled with the terrific visions, the horrid dreams, the flames of the unquenchable fire, which float and burn in the veins of the confirmed inebriate!

Young men! Do you shudder at the con-

dition of this wretched youth, whose form yet flits like a shadow through our streets? Would you avoid his fate? Do you start back in affright at the mere thought of becoming the poor, cast-off wreck of humanity that he is? Then avoid the rock on which he foundered his bark. Shun, as you would a nest of vipers, the company of the reckless and profligate. Avoid all association, all companionship, all intimacy, with those whose habits deviate from the high rules of rectitude, purity, and virtue.

Allow me to paint you a picture of an opposite character, drawn also from real life. I have another young man in my mind's eye, who originated in our own county. He had but few of the advantages of him whose melancholy career I have painted. He was the son of parents who possessed but little means, and who could afford him no assistance after the days of childhood. He was early placed to the hard labor of a mechanic. But he did not sink into lewdness and vice, under the pressure of his adverse circumstances. He

would not spend his leisure hours at public resorts, in the midst of the profligate and reckless. Each moment of respite from labor, he applied himself to study and the improvement of his mind. With great wisdom he avoided the company of idle, profane and vicious youth; and would associate with none but the discreet, the intelligent and virtuous. He was determined to RISE in the world, and to win a name which should live long after he should pass from the earth. He placed his mark high! With indomitable courage and unwearied perseverance, he pursued the path he had chosen for himself. He cut his way through every obstacle, and overcame every hindrance and difficulty, though they might seem to tower mountain high. Friends came to his aid, as they will to the assistance of every youth who is industriously seeking to rise in the world by the strength of his own merits. At length, after great exertions, he obtained a profession, and entered into a field where he could bring into active exercise the fund of knowledge he had been

acquiring under so many difficulties. One thus industrious, thus pure in his habits, thus upright and honorable in all his transactions, could not fail to receive the commendation and confidence of his fellow-citizens. Rapidly he rose from one post of honor to another. Ere long he was sent to the Legislature of our State. Soon he entered the halls of Congress, where he won the confidence of his compeers, and arose to honorable distinction. From step to step he advanced—high and higher still he ascended the ladder of fame—until now, the poor mechanic boy of Montville, occupies the *second place* in the gift of the American people—within *one step* of the highest pinnacle of fame to which man can attain on the earth! How noble the career—how splendid the example—placed before the youth of our country, in the history of this eminent man! How honorable to himself—how worthy of imitation.

I need not ask the young men of this audience, which place they would prefer to occupy, the position of the poor inebriate of

whom I have spoken, or that of the Vice-President of the United States? It is instructive to inquire why the one, with opportunities so good, sunk so low, and the other, with early advantages so limited, has arisen so high? This disparity in their condition is to be attributed to the different paths they selected at the outset of life. While the one trampled on all his advantages, and foolishly associated with the vicious and unprincipled, the other diligently applied himself to the acquisition of useful knowledge, and was scrupulous to associate with none but those who were discreet and virtuous, and whose influence was calculated to elevate and purify him.

These two cases, drawn from real life, are but a specimen of instances with which the world is filled. They show how immensely important it is for the young to reflect maturely on the course they would pursue, and the necessity of selecting for their associates such as have habits, tastes, and principles, proper for commendation and imitation.

Most of those who come under the influence of corrupt associates, are led thither more from sheer thoughtlessness, than from any disposition to become depraved. They fall into the company of those who are gay, sociable and pleasant in their manners; who make time pass agreeably, and who contrive many ways to drive dull care away, which do not, in themselves, appear very bad. The thoughtless youth becomes attached to their society, and gradually gives himself up to their influence. Almost imperceptibly to himself, he follows them farther and farther from the path of rectitude, until, before he is aware of it, some vicious habit has fixed its fangs upon him, and made him its wretched slave for life.

The difficulty in these cases, is the want of a due exercise of reflection and discernment. The young should guard against being deceived by outward appearances. Beneath a pleasant, agreeable exterior—beneath sociability and attractive manners—there may lurk vicious propensities, depraved ap-

petites, and habits of the most corrupt nature. Hence the young should look beyond the surface, and guard against deceptive appearances. It should not be enough to make a young man or a young woman your associate, that they are sociable and attractive in their manners, and can make their company agreeable. Search farther than this. Strive to know their tastes, their habits, their principles. Inquire how, and where, they spend their leisure hours—in what company do they mingle—what practices do they approbate—what is their general conduct and demeanor? If in all these respects, they are found to be discreet, virtuous, and worthy of imitation, then hesitate not to associate with them, and allow yourself to be influenced by them. But if you find them deficient in any of these characteristics, however attractive they may be in other respects, shun their company, and avoid their influence. The effect of associating with them would be to lead you astray, to your ruin.

In selecting associates, studiously avoid those who are low, coarse, and vulgar in their behavior and manners. Rudeness and vulgarity are unbecoming any age. But they are especially offensive and indecorous in youth. The young man, or young woman, who has not sufficient self-respect and pride of character to deport themselves with modesty, circumspection, and politeness, is unfitted to be an associate. A bold, brazen, forward demeanor, indicates a heart far from possessing those delicate and amiable traits, which are alone worthy of imitation. Vulgarity in language or demeanor, indicates a vitiated heart. Cultivation and refinement of manners are, to a good degree, evidence of a pure spirit, and high and honorable feelings.

The youth who is truly polite, has a great advantage, in every respect, over those who are deficient in this desirable qualification. Many, however, entertain very erroneous views of the nature of politeness. It does not consist in putting on an air, a simper, a strut, or a bow. Neither is it to be mani-

fested in high-flown words, or a fashionable pronunciation. Many young persons who can make very accomplished bows, and go through all the postures and attitudes of the schools, are still ignorant of the first principles of genuine politeness, and violate them every day. Politeness is not to be learned of the dancing-master, the fop, or the belle. Do you inquire where it can be obtained? I answer, in the gospel of our Saviour. True-hearted Christians are always polite. They cannot be otherwise, while influenced by the Christian spirit. For the first great principle of true politeness is found in the Saviour's golden rule — "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Treat others as you wish to be treated yourself, and you cannot fail of being polite. Treat them as you wish *not* to be treated, and you are ill-bred and vulgar, though you may be dressed in the extreme of fashion, and steeped in Cologne! Politeness, in its true acceptation, is but another word for kindness. The truly polite

man and woman, are not haughty, nor exclusive—they are not starched, nor supercilious. They show their politeness in being respectful to the feelings of persons of every rank, condition, and complexion. They treat all kindly and gently; and seek to make those in their presence to feel easy and happy. The whole secret of politeness may be summed up in a single sentence—Make yourselves agreeable and pleasant to whomsoever you meet. With this intent, your manners will be easy and natural; and you will be polite in every true sense of the word, though brought up in the centre of the wilderness.

In selecting those they would imitate in regard to politeness, the young should not choose the starched fop, the gaudily-dressed dandy, who may owe all their attractions to the unpaid tailor—nor the fashionable belle, who sneers upon everything plain and useful. They, more than all others, violate the first principles of politeness in their demeanor. But select the plain-dressed, the modest, the affable, the kind and friendly at heart. In

these you find the true lady—the genuine gentleman.

In regard to this whole subject of the selection of associates, I would earnestly counsel the young to listen respectfully to the advice of their parents, guardians, and elder friends. They should not be headstrong, nor wise in their own conceits; but should yield to the counsel of others. Your parents are far better calculated to judge of associates than themselves. You are liable to be blinded to their defects, and deceived by specious appearances. But parents scrutinize them from a different position. They have been through the school of experience, and are much better prepared to judge of character. Listen, O ye youthful! to their warning voice. They are moved by love for you—they speak for your good. When they entreat you to avoid the society of certain individuals, and escape their influence, heed their exhortations. Your own heart will tell you, that your father and mother would not

speak, simply to thwart your feelings; but that they see danger hovering around you, and would snatch you away, as the bird from the fowler's snare! That is a wise and promising son—a prudent and hopeful daughter—who pays respectful deference to the counsel of parents, and yields a cheerful compliance with their wishes!

"So live, that when thy summons comes, to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams!"

LECTURE IV.

Habits and Amusements.

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established."
—Prov. iv. 26.

THERE is not a youth present this evening, who will not acknowledge this to be sound and wholesome advice. Were you walking in a slippery, dangerous way, amid the darkness of midnight, you would give the strictest heed to the friendly precaution—"Ponder the path of thy feet. Be careful where you step. When you put your foot down, see to it, that it rests on something well-established—some rock, some spot of earth, that is firm and solid." This advice would be heeded, because of

your consciousness that by stepping heedlessly, you would be in danger of stumbling into a pit, or falling over a precipice, where your limbs would be broken, or life destroyed. Simple discretion would bid you beware, under such circumstances. The youthful should fully realize that they are walking in a pathway, which to them is wholly untried and unknown. It is a road surrounded by many dangers, unseen by the careless traveller; where he is liable to be lured aside to ruin, by a thousand fascinations and temptations, and where multitudes possessing the best advantages, the highest talents, the brightest genius, the rarest gifts, have stumbled and fallen, to rise no more on earth. While pressing on ardently and thoughtlessly in this dangerous highway, apprehending no difficulty, and fearing no peril, a voice from on high calls to the young, and urges them to "Ponder the path of their feet, and to let all their ways—their footsteps—be established!" There is wisdom, prudence, goodness, in this exhortation.

Question the old man—the aged traveller—who has passed over this pathway of life, and is just ready to step up into the mysterious road of a higher existence. Ask him as to his experience—beseech him for advice. Looking back through the vista of his long and chequered way, of light and shadow, of joy and sorrow, he will exclaim—"O ye youthful! Give heed to the admonition of the wise man—'Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.'"

The admonition of the text is important in reference to the *Habits* and *Amusements* of the youthful. We are all more or less the creatures of habit. Our ways, from earliest infancy, are more the result of the force of habit, than we are generally aware. The actions, words, and thoughts of men, form for themselves certain channels, in which they continually seek to flow, unless turned aside by a strong hand, and a painful effort.

Habits are formed insensibly. We are not aware of any moment when they are created; but the first consciousness of their

being fixed upon us, is, when their great power is felt impelling us strongly to certain courses. A single deed does not create a habit. One thread of hemp forms not a rope. It contains but a very slight amount of strength. But when a large number of threads are laid and twisted together, they make the mighty cable, which, attached to the ship, enables her to bid a proud defiance to the fierce gales and mountain billows of ocean. Thus the young are continually, yet unconsciously, spinning the threads of habit. Day by day the strands increase, and are twisted tighter together; until at length they become strong and unyielding cords, binding their possessor to customs and practices which fix his character and prospects for life.

It is of the greatest importance that the young should inquire faithfully into the nature of the habits they are forming. They should not fall into self-deception—a common error, on this subject. The love of indulgence should not be permitted to blind

them to the legitimate consequences of careless habits. Let them look abroad on their fellow-beings, and critically study the tendencies and fruits of their habits. When they see one prosperous in life—one who is respected, confided in, and beloved by all—who leads a quiet, pleasant and peaceful life, —mark his habits, and strive to imitate them. They will bless them as well as him, if faithfully practised. And when they behold a man disliked and despised by his neighbors, especially by those who know him best—or one who has fallen into disgrace and ruin; who has lost his character, his health, his happiness, and become an outcast and vagabond,—let them not fail to learn what his habits have been. Look at them carefully and critically. Ponder well the effect they have had upon him. And then strive to avoid them. Shun them as the poisonous viper whose sting is death. Let them wind not a single coil of their fatal chains around the free spirit of the young. The same appalling consequences will be

visited on every youth who indulges them, that have fallen on those whose condition excites both pity and loathing in their breasts.

In youth, habits are much easier formed and corrected, than at a later period of life. If they are right now, preserve, strengthen and mature them. If they are wrong—if they have any dangerous influence or tendency—correct them immediately. Delay not the effort an hour. The earlier you make the attempt to remedy a bad habit, the easier it will be accomplished. Every day adds to its strength and vigor; until, if not conquered in due time, it will become a voracious monster, devouring everything good and excellent. It will make its victim a miserable, drivelling slave, to be continually lashed and scourged into the doing of its low and wretched promptings. Hence the importance of attending to the habits in early life, when they are easily controlled and corrected. If the young do not make themselves the masters of their passions, appetites, and habits, these will soon become

their masters, and make them their tool and bond-men through all their days.

Usually at the age of thirty years, the moral habits become fixed for life. New ones are seldom formed after that age; and quite as seldom are old ones abandoned. There are exceptions to this rule; but in general, it holds good. If the habits are depraved and vicious at that age, there is little hope of amendment. But if they are correct—if they are characterized by virtue, goodness, and sobriety—there is a flattering prospect of a prosperous and peaceful life. Remember, the habits are not formed, nor can they be corrected, in a single week or month. It requires years to form them, and years will be necessary to correct them permanently, when they are wrong. Hence, in order to possess good habits at maturity, it is all-important to commence schooling the passions, curbing the appetites, and bringing the whole moral nature under complete control, early in youth. This work cannot be commenced too soon. The earlier the ef-

fort, the easier it can be accomplished. To straighten the tender twig, when it grows awry from the ground, is the easiest thing imaginable. A child can do it at the touch of its finger. But let the twig become a matured tree before the attempt is made, and it will baffle all the art of man to bring it to a symmetrical position. It must be uprooted from the very soil, before this can be accomplished. It is not difficult to correct a bad habit when it commences forming. But wait until it has become fully developed, and it will require a long and painful exertion of every energy to correct it.

Permit me to enumerate a few of the more important habits, which the young should seek to cultivate.

First of all—the most important of all—and that, indeed, which underlies and gives coloring to all others—is the habit of TEMPERANCE. Surely it is needless for me, at this day, to dwell upon the evils of intemperance. It cannot be necessary to paint the bitter consequences—the destruction to

property, health, reputation—the overthrow of the peace of families, the want and misery, to which its victims are frequently reduced. The disgrace, the wretchedness, the ruin, the useless and ignominious life, and the horrid death, which are so often caused by habits of intemperance, are seen, and known to all. No one attempts, no one thinks of denying them. The most interested dealer, or retailer in intoxicating drinks —the most confirmed inebriate—will acknowledge without hesitation, that intemperance is the direst evil that ever cursed a fallen race!! The deleterious consequences of other vices may sometimes be concealed for a season, from outward observation. Not so with intemperance. It writes its loathsome name, in legible characters, upon the very brow of its wretched victim. "*I am a drunkard!*" is as plainly to be read as though a printed label was posted there!

Need I warn—need I exhort—the young to avoid the habit of intemperance. Perhaps there is not a youth present, who is not

ready to say, "To me this exhortation is needless. I have not the slightest expectation of becoming a drunkard!" Of course not. There never was a man who desired, or expected, to become a victim to intemperance. The great danger of this habit is, that it creeps stealthily and imperceptibly upon the unwary. It does its work gradually. The most besotted inebriate cannot tell you the day, nor the month, when he became a confirmed drunkard. It is in the nature of this habit, that those who expose themselves at all to its assaults, become its victims, while they are entirely unaware of it.

The only safeguard and security, against this scourge of man, is *total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks!!* Here is the true, the safe ground for the young. There is no other condition of entire security. No man who drinks, however sparingly, has assurance of a sober life. He needlessly, and foolishly, places himself in danger—turns his footsteps into the only path that can possi-

bly lead to the drunkard's ruin and the drunkard's grave!

Drink the *first drop* that can intoxicate, and your feet stand at the very brink of the ocean of intemperance. Its briny waters are composed of human tears. Its winds, the sighs of those made poor and wretched by the inebriation of husbands, fathers, sons. Its billows, ever tossing, are overhung with black and lowering clouds, and illuminated only by the lightning's vivid flash, while hoarse thunders reverberate over the wide and desolate waste. Engulphed in this dreary ocean, the wretched drunkard is buffeted hither and thither, at the mercy of its angry waves—now dashed on jagged rocks, bruised and bleeding—then engulphed in raging whirlpools to suffocating depths—anon, like a worthless weed, cast high into the darkened heavens by the wild waterspout, only to fall again into the surging deep, to be tossed to and fro on waters which cannot rest! Rash youth! Would you launch away on this sea of death? Quaff

of the intoxicating bowl, and soon its hungry waves will be around you. Would you avoid a fate so direful? Seal your lips to the *first drop*, and the drear prospect will sink forever from your vision!

Young men who would guard themselves against the baleful habit of intemperance, should shun all resorts where intoxicating drinks are vended. They should avoid throwing themselves in the way of temptation. "Lead us not into temptation," should be the constant prayer of the young. When by any combination of circumstances, they find themselves in the company of those who quaff of the poisoned bowl, whether in public or private, they should exercise a manly pride in firmly refusing to participate in their potations. This is a legitimate and commendable pride, of which the young cannot have too much. Let them place themselves on the high rock of principle, and their feet will not slide in the trying hour.

"Oh! water for me! bright water for me,
And wine for the tremulous debauchee!

It cooleth the brow, it cooleth the brain,
It maketh the faint one strong again!
It comes o'er the sense like a breeze from the sea,
All freshness, like infant purity.
Oh! water, bright water, for me, for me!
Give wine, give wine, to the debauchee."

"The young man walks in the midst of temptations to appetite, the improper indulgence of which is in danger of proving his ruin. Health, longevity, and virtue depend on his resisting these temptations. The providence of God is no more responsible, because a man of improper indulgence becomes subject to disease, than for picking his pockets. For a young man to injure his health, is to waste his patrimony and destroy his capacity for virtuous deeds.

"If young men imagine that the gratification of appetite is the great source of enjoyment, they will find this in the highest degree with industry and *temperance.* The epicure, who seeks it in a dinner which costs five dollars, will find less enjoyment of appetite than the laborer who dines on a shilling. If the devotee to appetite desires its high

gratification, he must not send for buffalo tongues and champagne, but climb a mountain or swing an axe. Let a young man pursue temperance, sobriety, and industry, and he may retain his vigor till three score years and ten, with his cup of enjoyment full, and depart painlessly; as the candle burns out in its socket, he will expire."*

Next to Temperance in importance, I would rank the habit of Industry. We were evidently made for active occupation. Every joint, sinew, and muscle plainly shows this. A young person who is an idler, a drone, is a pest in society. He is ready to engage in mischief, and to fall into vice, with but little resistance. It is an old saying, that "an idle brain is the devil's workshop." Those who are not actively employed in something useful, will be very likely to fall into evil practices. Industry is one of the best safeguards against the inroads of vice. The young, whatever may be their condition, or however abundantly they may be-

* Horace Mann.

lieve their future wants already provided for, should actively engage in some honorable occupation or profession—in something that will benefit mankind. They should be fired with the high and noble ambition of making the world better for their living in it. Who can wish to pass a *blank* existence? Yet this is the life of every idler, poor or rich. Be stirring in anything which is useful—anything which will make others happy. Then you will not have lived in vain. Behold how a good man can devote his life to labors for the benefit of others. Would you partake of the immortal fame of a Howard? Imitate, to the extent of your ability, the example of industrious benevolence he has placed before the world.

"From realm to realm, with cross or crescent crowned,
Where'er mankind and misery are found,
O'er burning sands, deep waves, or wilds of snow,
Mild Howard journeying seeks the house of woe.
Down many a winding step to dungeons dank,
Where anguish wails aloud and fetters clank,
To caves bestrewed with many a mouldering bone,
And cells whose echoes only learn to groan;
Where no kind bars a whispering friend disclose,
No sunbeam enters, and no zephyr blows;—

He treads, inemulous of fame or wealth,
Profuse of toil and prodigal of health;
Leads stern-eyed Justice to the dark domains,
If not to sever, to relax his chains;
Gives to her babes the self-devoted wife,
To her fond husband liberty and life,—
Onward he moves! disease and death retire;
And murmuring demons hate him and admire."

To young women industry is equally essential and commendable. An idle woman is a poor and worthless thing. For what does she imagine she was created? Of what service is she to the world? In what respect would not the world be as well without her? A *do-nothing* young lady is most assuredly pitied and despised by those whose good opinion she is most anxious to secure.

It is not enough that a young woman can play skilfully, sing delightfully, dance gracefully, dress fashionably, and has an abundant flow of "small talk." The world looks beyond these outward ornaments, and asks —Has she a good heart and gentle disposition? Is she affectionate and forbearing? Can she rule her temper and control her

tongue? Does she respect and obey her parents? Has she a well-cultivated and well-stored mind? Is she industrious, prudent, economical? Is she able and willing to engage in household duties? Accomplishments are not to be overlooked. But the qualities above enumerated are essential, indispensable, to the character of a good daughter and a useful wife.

"ACTION! *That's* the word. The great world itself throbs with life. Action, untiring harmony pervades the Universe of God. The Creative Power has so ordained it. The physical formation of the world, and all therein, forbids inactivity. The vast machinery must move, or the whole cease to exist. Man was never designed to be a drone. Had he lived pure in the first Paradise, he could not have been idle. Sick or well, in cold or heat, day or night, the machine moves on, the heart, like a steam-engine, throbs away, and faithfully pumps its crimson currents unceasingly to every part of the animal frame. Action is one of the first elements of health

and happiness. The mind will stagnate and engender moral miasma, as much as the pool never stirred by a tide or swept by the winds.

"God has written action on the Heavens. Silent, but ceaseless, the worlds that gleam out upon us, keep on their course. Every orb follows the track marked out for it. The Ocean rolls and heaves. The spring gushes out from the hill-side and dances from rock to rock, and the brook hums and murmurs its melody as it goes. Upon the meadow, the springing grass tells of the process that annually clothes the turf with wealth and beauty. The leaves put out, rustle in the winds, and fall to their rest, while others follow. The fierce, fiery energy of the lightning writes the truth upon the scudding clouds. The formless waves that in the atmosphere ripple and dash against the cheek, tell of a restless ocean around us, a medium of health and sound. From the world that rolls, to the summer flies that float on the air and glance in the sun, the truth is pro-

claimed that all is activity. Man cannot be idle—should not."*

"One of the most mischievous phrases in which a rotten Morality, a radically false and vicious Public Sentiment, disguise themselves, is that which characterizes certain individuals as destitute of financial capacity. A 'kind, amiable, generous, good sort of man,' (so runs the varnish,) 'but utterly unqualified for the management of his own finances'—'a mere child in everything relating to money,' &c. &c.—meaning that with an income of $500 a year, he persisted in spending $1000; or with an income of from $2000 to $3000, he regularly spent from $5000 to $8000, according to his ability to run in debt, or the credulity of others in trusting him.

"The victims of this immorality—debtor as well as creditor—are entitled to more faithful dealing at the hands of those not directly affected by the misdemeanors of the former. It is the duty of the community to rebuke and repress these pernicious glosses,

* T. W. Brown.

making the truth heard and felt, that inordinate expenditure is knavery and crime. No man has a moral right thus to lavish on his own appetites, money which he has not earned, and does not really need. If public opinion were sound on this subject—if a man living beyond his means, when his means were commensurate with his real needs, were subjected to the reprehension he deserves—the evil would be instantly checked, and ultimately eradicated.

"The world is full of people who can't imagine why they don't prosper like their neighbors, when the real obstacle is not in the banks nor tariffs, in bad public policy nor hard times, but in their own extravagance and heedless ostentation. The young mechanic or clerk marries and takes a house, which he proceeds to furnish twice as expensively as he can afford; and then his wife, instead of taking hold to help him earn a livelihood by doing her own work, must have a hired servant to help her spend his limited earnings. Ten years afterward, you will find

him struggling on under a double load of debts and children, wondering why the luck was always against him, while his friends regret his unhappy destitution of financial ability. Had they, from the first, been frank and honest, he need not have been so unlucky.

"Through every grade of society this vice of inordinate expenditure insinuates itself. The single man 'hired out' in the country at ten to fifteen dollars per month, who contrives to dissolve his year's earnings in frolics and fine clothes; the clerk who has three to five hundred dollars a year, and melts down twenty to fifty of it into liquor and cigars, are paralleled by the young merchant who fills a spacious house with costly furniture, gives dinners, and drives a fast horse, on the strength of the profits he expects to realize when his goods are all sold and his notes all paid. Let a man have a genius for spending, and whether his income is a dollar a day or a dollar a minute, it is equally certain to prove inadequate. If dining, wining,

and party-giving won't help him through with it, building, gaming, and speculation will be sure to. The bottomless pocket will never fill, no matter how bounteous the stream pouring into it. The man who (being single) does not save money on six dollars a week, will not be apt to on sixty; and he who does not lay up something in his first year of independent exertion, will be pretty likely to wear a poor man's hair into his grave.

"No man who has the natural use of his faculties and his muscles, has any right to tax others with the cost of his support, as this class of non-financial gentlemen habitually do. It is their common mistake to fancy that if a debt is only paid at last, the obligation of the debtor is fulfilled; but the fact is not so. A man who sells his property for another's promise to pay next week or next month, and is compelled to wear out a pair of boots in running after his due, which he finally gets after a year or two, is never really paid. Very often, he has lost half the face

of his demand, by not having the money when he needed it, beside the cost and vexation of running after it. There is just one way to pay an obligation in full, and that is to pay it when due. He who keeps up a running fight with bills and loans through life, is continually living on other men's means, is a serious burden and a detriment to those who deal with him, although his estate should finally pay every dollar of his legal obligations.

"Inordinate expenditure is the cause of a great share of the crime and consequent misery which devastate the world. The clerk who spends more than he earns, is fast qualifying himself for a gambler and a thief; the trader or mechanic who overruns his income, is very certain to become in time a trickster and a cheat. Wherever you see a man spending faster than he earns, there look out for villainy to be developed, though it be the farthest thing possible from his present thought.

"When the world shall have become wiser,

and its standard of morality more lofty, it will perceive and affirm that profuse expenditure, even by one who can pecuniarily afford it, is pernicious and unjustifiable—that a man, however wealthy, has no right to lavish on his own appetites, his tastes, or his ostentation, that which might have raised hundreds from destitution and despair to comfort and usefulness. But that is an improvement in public sentiment which must be waited for, while the other is more ready and obvious.

"The meanness, the dishonesty, the iniquity, of squandering thousands unearned, and keeping others out of money that is justly theirs, have rarely been urged and enforced as they should be. They need but to be considered and understood, to be universally loathed and detested."*

Nearly allied with the Habits of the young, are their *Amusements.* That the youthful should be allowed a reasonable degree of recreation, is universally admitted. The laws

* Horace Greeley.

of health demand relaxation from the labors and cares of life. The body, the mind, constantly strained to the highest exertion, without repose, and something to cheer, refreshen, and re-invigorate it, will speedily fall into disease and death. The very word recreation—(re-creation)—indicates that to a degree, proper amusement has the power to revive the wearied energies, supply afresh the springs of life, and give a renewed elasticity and endurance to all the capacities of our nature.

Yet there is no subject surrounded with greater difficulties, than the *amusements* of the youthful. There is no amusement, however harmless and proper in its nature, but what can be carried to such excess, as to inflict deep injury. It is while searching for recreations, that the youthful meet the most dangerous temptations, and fall into the most vicious practices. How important that they should make this a matter of mature reflection and acute discrimination. Pleasure we all desire. It is sought for by every human

being. But it is essential to distinguish between true pleasure, which we can enjoy with real benefit, and *false pleasure*, which deceives, demoralizes, and destroys. The poet truly describes the nature of this distinction, when he says,

> "Pleasure, or wrong, or rightly understood,
> Our greatest evil, or our greatest good!"

One of the first things requisite to be understood is, that in order to enjoy any amusement, a previous *preparation* is necessary. That preparation is to be obtained by *useful occupation*. It is only by contrast that we can enjoy anything. Without weariness, we can know nothing of rest. Without first enduring hunger and thirst, we cannot experience the satisfaction of partaking of food and drink. In like manner, it is only by faithful and industrious application to business of some kind—it is only by occupying the mind in useful employment—that we can draw any satisfaction from recreation. Without this preparation, all amusement

loses its charm. Were the young to engage in one unceasing round of pastimes, from day to day, with no time or thought devoted to useful occupation, recreation would soon be divested of its attractions, and become insipid and painfully laborious. To be beneficial, amusements should be virtuous in their tendencies, healthful in their influence on the body, and of *brief duration.*

Among the many pastimes to which the young resort for amusement, *card-playing* often fills a prominent place. This is a general, and in some circles, a fashionable practice; but it is objectionable and injurious in all its influences, and in every possible point of view. Nothing good or instructive, nothing elevating or commendable, in any sense, can come from it. All its fruits must necessarily be evil.

It is a senseless occupation. Nothing can be more unmeaning and fruitless, among all the employments to which a rational mind can devote its attention. It affords no useful exercise of the intellect—no food for pro-

fitable thought—no power to call into activity the higher and better capacities. It is true, I suppose, there is some degree of cunning and skill to be displayed in managing the cards. But what high intellectual, or moral capacity is brought into exercise by a game so trivial? It excludes interesting and instructive interchanges of sentiment, on topics of any degree of importance; and substitutes talk of a frivolous and meaningless character. To a spectator, the conversation of a card-table, is of the most uninteresting and childish description.

There are, however, more serious objections than these. Card-playing has a tendency of the most dangerous description, especially to the youthful. Let a young man become expert in this game, and fond of engaging in it, and who does not see he is liable to become that most mean and despicable of all living creatures—a GAMBLER. Confident of his own skill as a card-player, how long would he hesitate to engage in a game for a small sum? He has seen older ones

playing—perhaps his own parents—and he can discover no great harm in doing the same thing, even if it is for a stake of a few shillings. From playing for small sums, the steps are very easy which lead to large amounts. And in due time, the young man becomes a gambler, from no other cause than that he acquired a love for card-playing, when he engaged in it only as an amusement.

Parents have a responsibility resting on them in this respect, of which they should not lose sight. They cannot be surprised that their children imitate their examples. With all the dangerous associations and tendencies of card-playing, would they have their children acquire a passion for it? What wise parent can make such a choice for his son? Ah, how many a young man has become a gamester, a black-leg, an inmate of the prison cell, because, in the home of his childhood, he acquired a love of the card-table. He but imitated the practice of parents, whose duty it was to set him a better example, and *was led to the path of ruin!*

If, from its influences, card-playing, even for amusement, is improper for gentlemen, I conceive it much more so for ladies. A woman—and more especially a young woman—seems entirely out of place at a card-table. The associations are so masculine—they bring to mind so much of the cut-and-shuffle trickery, vulgarity and profanity—so many of the words and phrases of that *hell*, the gaming-table—that for a lady to indulge in them, appears entirely opposed to that modesty and refinement, which are so becoming the female character. I trust all young ladies of discretion will shun the card-table. I am confident every woman, who possesses a proper sense of the dignity and delicacy which form the highest attractions of the female character, will avoid a practice which is made an instrument of the most despicable uses, and to which the most vile and abandoned constantly resort.

"Daughters of those who, long ago,
Dared the dark storm and angry sea,
And walked the desert way of woe,
And pain, and trouble to be free!

Oh, be like them! like them endure,
And bow beneath affliction's rod;
Like them be watchful, high and pure—
In all things seek the smile of God."

The same caution I have uttered in regard to card-playing, I would apply to all games of hazard and chance. The young should never indulge in them, even for amusement. Although they may be able to see no harm in them as recreations, yet the influences they exert, and the associations into which they lead, cannot but exert a deleterious influence. They can do no good. They may lead to the most dire results!

Another amusement in which the youthful frequently engage, is *Dancing*. This is the most fascinating of pastimes. And it might be made the most proper, healthful, and invigorating. In the simple act of dancing—of moving the body in unison with strains of music—there can be no harm. It is a custom which has been practised in all ages, and among all nations, both civilized and barbarous. The very lambs in the green and sunny meadow, and the cattle on a thou-

sand hills, in many a fantastic gambol, exult and rejoice in the blessings a kind Providence bestows upon them. It is one of Nature's methods of attesting the consciousness of enjoyment.

Dancing, when viewed in the light of a pleasant bodily exercise, is undoubtedly healthy and beneficial. It is peculiarly so to females, and those whose occupation and habits are of a sedentary character. When properly engaged in, it strengthens the limbs, developes the chest, enlarges the lungs, and invigorates the whole system.

But this pastime is greatly abused, and is so perverted as to have become one of the most serious evils. In this view, it is subject to severe and well-grounded censure. As dancing is usually conducted in modern times, it has proved one of the greatest evils into which the youthful have fallen. The routs and balls to which the young resort, as generally managed, cannot be too severely condemned. The late hours to which they are prolonged—the rich and unhealthy pas-

try partaken of in abundance—the intoxicating drinks passed around, or conveniently found in the side-room, or at the bar—the thoughtless manner of dressing, exposing to cold and damp, and so confining the *lungs*, that when, by reason of exercise, they need the most room for expansion, they have the least, thus sowing the seeds of speedy disease and early death—the long-continued excitement and over-fatigue—the improper company which often assembles on such occasions—these all combine to make such assemblages a source of injury in all their influences and consequences. They should be discountenanced by every parent and well-wisher of public good. The young of both sexes, who have any just regard for their morals and their health, should avoid these routs, and balls, and cotillion parties. Their tendency, in every respect, is evil in the extreme.

Dancing among children, in their pastimes —or by young people, at private parties, or social gatherings, engaged in temperately, and for a brief period, with proper precau-

tions in regard to health, cannot be objectionable. In this, as in most other amusements, it is the excess, the abuse, that causes the injury.

In urging these considerations on the young, I would not seek to deprive them of any amusement suited to their age and circumstances. Youth is the season of joyousness—of light-hearted pleasure, and budding hope. I would not overshadow one ray of its bright and beautiful sunshine—nor check one throb of its innocent pleasure. The shadows, the cares, and burthens of life, will come upon them full early enough, at the latest. In the spring-time of their days—the delicious, romantic morning of their being—they can experience some of the sweetest hours of their earthly existence. Nor would I rob them of that which God and nature designed them to enjoy. But I would have them seek for innocent amusements—for recreations and enjoyments, of a pure and elevated character. None other can make them truly happy. All things

sinful in their nature, or demoralizing in their tendency, are unmitigated evils, destructive in their consequences. However attractive they may appear to the inexperienced, in the form of amusements, yet in the end, they will "bite as a serpent, and sting as an adder."

There is no necessity that the young should resort to that which is low and vicious to find amusement. A thousand means of recreation surround them, of the most harmless character. The enjoyments of the paternal roof—the social party, where the young engage in sprightly conversation, or innocent pastimes—the friendly call—the perusal of interesting and instructive books—the scanning of the journals of the day, by which they can look out upon the shifting scene of the busy, restless world—the summer morning walk, to behold the opening beauties of the glorious day, and listen to the singing of the birds, the lowing of the flocks and herds, the murmuring of the streamlet, nature's early anthem of praise to God—or the even-

ing ramble, to watch the flowers as they open their fragrant leaves to be bathed in sweet distilling dews—to gaze upon the golden sunset, making the fleecy clouds to blush with a crimson glow, as the king of day bids them "good night;" or to behold the stars, as one by one they come forth to their appointed stations, bestudding the whole heavens with crystal coronets.—These, O youth! and countless other fountains, are open for you, from which the sweetest and purest enjoyments can be obtained. Seek for amusement—for pleasure—in these directions, and the cup which you press to your lips shall be one of unmixed happiness!

"While some in folly's pleasures roll,
And court the joys that hurt the soul,
Be mine that silent, calm repast,
A conscience peaceful to the last."

LECTURE V.

The Religious Sentiments.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."—Eccl. xii. 1.

THERE are few subjects so generally uninteresting to the youthful as Religion. The great majority prefer to have their attention called in any other direction, and to be addressed on any topic, rather than this, which, in fact, is the most important of all. There is evidently a defect somewhere in this matter, which should be corrected. Where shall we seek for it? Not in any natural, inherent aversion to the subject of religion, resting in the hearts of the young. It is neither reasonable in itself,

nor respectful to the Creator, to insist he has so constituted the human soul, that it is naturally and necessarily indisposed to a topic which is most vitally connected with its happiness, and which should receive a large share of its attention.

This indifference is to be attributed chiefly, I think, to improper impressions in regard to the nature and objects of religion. The young look upon it as something gloomy, saddening, and distasteful—something that forbids enjoyment, chains in dire bondage the free, glad spirit of early life, and casts dark and cheerless shadows on the sunshine of youth's bright morning! They imagine it to stalk forth from a dark cell, arrayed in hood and cowl, to frown upon them in their innocent pastimes—to curdle their blood with severe rebukes, because of the buoyancy of their hearts, and to drive them back with scowling reprimands, when they would walk in the sunny paths which God has kindly opened for their elastic footsteps. Hence they close their ears to its invitations;

turn away from its instructions, as something designed to impose a heavy yoke upon them; and postpone its claims, to be attended to among the last acts of life.

That these views and feelings should widely prevail, on a subject so important as religion, is a matter of deep regret. They are erroneous and deleterious, in the extreme. Let the young strive to become acquainted with the true nature of the religion of Christ, and they will learn that such are not its requirements, nor its fruits. It is not the purpose of its Divine Author to sadden the heart, or fill the mind with gloom; but to cheer and gladden the soul, and lead it to the highest and sweetest enjoyments of existence. It is not the aim of religion to deprive the young of any real enjoyment—any recreation proper to their age or their nature, as intellectual, moral, and spiritual beings. But it would assist the young to distinguish between permanent happiness, and those hurtful and wicked gratifications which corrupt the heart, and plunge the whole being into the dark

pool of sin and woe. Religion is the friendly Guide sent from our Father in heaven, to lead his creatures away from peril and woe, and direct their footsteps into the most beautiful and happy paths of existence.

> "Through life's bewildered way,
> Her hand unerring leads;
> And o'er the path her heavenly ray
> A cheering lustre sheds."

What sight can present itself to the eye more pleasing than a *religious youth.* By this I do not mean a gloomy, downcast, sorrowful young man, or young woman, whose countenance is overcast with shadows, and whose presence chills every beholder. It is a darkened superstition, a cold, cheerless asceticism, and not the Christian religion, which gives this unnatural and forbidding appearance. A religious youth is one who is cheerful and happy—whose countenance is pervaded with an expression of benevolence, a smile of contentment—who is constant in attendance on public worship—who respects

the Scriptures, and makes their daily perusal one of the fixed duties of life—who loves God, and strives faithfully to keep his commandments—who reverences the Saviour of man, and takes him as a pattern in all things—who is honest, industrious, economical, and strictly temperate. Behold the fair picture! Is it not goodly to look upon? Can earth furnish a spectacle more beautiful? Such a youth is beloved of all men. Angels, Christ, the Father, smile their approval on every one treading this high pathway

"Sweet is the early dew
Which gilds the mountain tops,
And decks each plant and flower we view
With pearly, glittering drops;
But sweeter far the scene
On Zion's holy hill,
When there the dew of youth is seen
Its freshness to distill."

Is there a youth in the audience who does not desire to occupy a position so elevated and so honorable? Do not imagine it is beyond your reach. Every one can attain to it by proper exertion. It is not difficult of

accomplishment. With pure desires, and right intentions, nothing is more feasible. In fact, so to conduct as to secure such a character, and attain to such a position, is the most easy, pleasant, and happy path in which the young can walk. All others are full of difficulty, vexation, trouble, and wretchedness. All others yield fruit the most bitter and poisonous—fruit which, however luscious and tempting it may appear to the eye, like the apples of Sodom, will turn to ashes in the hand.

If the young are looking simply for a peaceful and happy life, where prosperity will be the most likely to attend them, and where the richest and choicest blessings will be showered on their pathway, they will find it in the practice of religion. So far from being a heavy burthen, a grievous cross, it is the lightener of all burthens, the easiest of all yokes, the kindest, truest friend, to help along the rough spots, and smile and cheer in the darkest hours of man's earthly pilgrimage. Listen to the representations of

religion found in the Word of God: "Wisdom is more precious than rubies; and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."* "Come, ye children, hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear [reverence] of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good. Seek peace and pursue it."† "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither. And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."‡ There

* Prov. iii. 15, 16, 17. † Ps. xxxiv. 11–14. ‡ Ps. i. 1, 2, 3.

is nothing sad and gloomy in these views; but everything pleasant and inviting.

I would disabuse the young of the idea that religion is needed only by the aged, the sick, and the dying; and that it can be of no essential service at other times. It does indeed become the hoary head, more than the jewelled diadem. It is the comforter of the sick—the supporter of the departing spirit—giving it a sustaining power which all earth's riches cannot purchase. But religion is quite as appropriate and essential to the youthful as to the aged and sick. It is equally as important that men should *live* right, as *die* right. There is no way so effectually to insure a peaceful and happy death, as to live a good and useful life. Religion leads to such a life, and prepares the way for such a death. Hence the necessity that the young should give themselves up to its influences in the morning of their days, that their meridian may be fruitful of good, and their evening sunset calm and serene.

Away, then, with the supposition, that re-

ligion is not adapted, nor necessary to youth. "The flower of youth never appears more beautiful, than when it leans towards the Sun of Righteousness." Religion is the brightest ornament with which the young can bedeck themselves. The fragrant blossom which crowns the tree, is not more beautiful, or hopeful of coming fruitfulness, than is religion to the freshness of youth. Indeed, as the blossom is necessary to insure the rich and golden fruit, so is early religion requisite to a useful and prosperous career. It is the best preparation the young can secure for after life, whatever calling they may pursue. There is no occupation, no pursuit, no profession, which they will not be far better prepared to enter, by the influence of an enlightened, cheerful, enlarged Christian faith and practice. These will interfere with no useful enterprise, no honest business, no laudable calling; nor prevent the prosecution of any of the many projects among men, which comport with the public good, and are executed on principles of integrity. Religion

will make its possessors better and more successful laborers, mechanics, manufacturers, agriculturists, merchants, and more respected and useful members of any of the learned professions.

If there is any pursuit, any business, which you cannot prosecute with the sanction of religion, avoid it at once and forever. You had better do anything else than engage in it. I would have the young strongly impressed with this view. It would be far preferable to suffer poverty and obscurity, in an honest and useful calling, than to obtain the possession and fame of great riches, in a pursuit which the pure and enlightened principles of Christianity would condemn. Although you may succeed in hoarding up mountains of gold in such a pursuit, and in possessing broad domains and "the cattle on a thousand hills," yet all this will not afford you one throb of genuine enjoyment. There would be that in the manner of obtaining these possessions, which would utterly deprive them of all power to impart happiness.

Wealth secured by extortion, fraud, or any practice or business of a corrupting nature, injurious to the morals, and destructive to the well-being of community, will be of no more value to him who thus obtains it, as far as his happiness is concerned, than so much dust. It is the consciousness of having obtained riches in honest and useful pursuits, that gives zest and relish to the enjoyments they procure. Without this consciousness, the man of wealth has less of pure peace and happiness than the poorest honest man in the wide world. In the very nature of things, as a wise and holy God has constituted us, this must inevitably be so. All past history and experience furnish indubitable proof of the correctness of this position. If I can impress this single truth on the hearts and memories of the youthful, I shall do them a service of a value beyond all human computation.

These considerations, I trust, will tend to convince the young of the vital importance of obtaining now, at the commencement of

their career, the direction and influence of well-grounded and enlightened religious views and principles. I would have them become neither fanatics nor bigots; but would urge them to place themselves under the pure and divine light of the gospel of Christ, that they may be exalted to the highest and noblest principles of human action, and to the summit of human enjoyment.

To what sources should the young apply for correct religious doctrines and principles? While they should give due heed to the instruction and advice of the learned, the wise and good, within whose influence they may be thrown, yet they should not depend wholly upon these sources for the attainment of truth. The wisest and best among religious teachers, differ materially on fundamental points. To rely solely on the convictions of others, however exalted their talents or sincere their opinions, would be injustice to yourselves, and to the truth you would obtain. Let no man *think* for you. He who would persuade you to allow him to

do so—who would have you distrust the convictions of your own reason, throw aside the decisions of your judgment, and allow him to judge and decide for you, in religious matters, does in fact assume to be your master, and would reduce you to a poor and pitiable spiritual bondage.

Let not the young overlook the fact, that they have been endowed by their Creator with the faculties of reason, judgment, and discrimination. These must necessarily be exercised in forming enlightened religious opinions. Those who fail to do this, fall an easy prey to every error that will but commend itself by something novel and startling. Christianity is pre-eminently a reasonable system of doctrines. There is no topic claiming the attention of man, in the investigation of which it is so important to exercise with all deliberation, the highest capacities of reason and reflection, as religion. From the great multiplicity of opinions which prevail, those who are distrustful of their own judgment and reason, and who are more disposed

to receive the *ipse dixit* of others, than to depend on the convictions of the good sense with which they have been endowed, will speedily become involved in a labyrinth of errors, from which it will be difficult to extricate themselves. Let the young, in all their religious investigations, hesitate not to appeal continually to the highest and noblest capacity of their nature, and give all due weight to its decisions. Freely, abundantly, your Maker has bestowed a reasoning capacity upon you. Freely, unhesitatingly, always should you appeal to its directing light.

Whoever counsel the young against the exercise of reason in regard to religion—whoever warn them to beware of its decisions on a topic so momentous—lay themselves open to a just and legitimate suspicion, of being the abettors of error. Is not this self-evident? Error is born in ignorance. It burrows in darkness, and draws all its vitality from stupid credulity. Enlightened reason strips away the false garbs by which it deceives the thoughtless, reveals its deformities,

and holds up its absurdities naked and repulsive, to the gaze of the passer-by. In view of such an unwelcome office, it is natural that error should dread the eye of reason, should shrink away at its approach, and cry out mightily against its scrutiny.

Not so is it with truth. It cultivates no apprehension of reason. It courts, invites its approach, and smiles in conscious strength at its most critical investigations. Truth has everything to gain, and nothing to lose from the researches of reason. The clearer and keener the eye of the one, the more beautiful the appearance of the other. Truth and Reason are twin sisters, born of God, and despatched from heaven, to guide and bless earth's children. They are linked together inseparably. The one is never found except in the presence of the other. Their blended light is all that gives value and beauty to Christianity, and all that makes it of any more importance than the merest heathen fable. Mutually they co-operate with, and strengthen each other. All Truth is reason-

able, and all the legitimate deductions of Reason are true. Truth forms the vital atmosphere which Reason inhales. Reason is the very sunlight in which Truth bathes its beauteous form.

Remember, O youth, religion does not require you to separate these heaven-born guides to men. Never expect to find religious truth, without beholding it radiant with the light of reason. Reject without hesitation, whatever is presented to you as truth, unless reason throws its divine sanction around it. In all your investigations, let Reason direct your footsteps; and, guided by revelation, it will at last, and unerringly, lead you to the glorious abode of Truth.

It is readily allowed, there are truths in Christianity which reason cannot fathom. Not because they are opposed to reason, but because they are beyond its reach. They are infinite, while man's reason is finite. But it is only by the light of reason that man can see any consistency or propriety in the assertion of such truths. Reason may sanc-

tion what it cannot fully grasp, as the boundlessness of space, or the endlessness of time. One thing may be *above* reason, another thing may be *opposed* to reason. The former it may approve—the latter it will peremptorily condemn. This is an important distinction, which should never be overlooked in its bearing on religious tenets.

In all researches for an enlightened religious faith, there are but two sources of information, on which reliance can be placed with entire confidence, viz. *the Works of Nature*, and the *Revealed Word of God.* Both are equally the productions of the Infinite Mind, and can be studied with the highest profit.

Nature's works are but an "elder Scripture," written by Jehovah's finger. In glowing suns and stars, we read its brilliant and instructive lessons. These all teach us aright of the perfections of the Sovereign Creator. They are "golden steps," on which the mind ascends to a clearer view of the great Creator. Behold the o'erarching canopy with which

God has adorned our earthly abode. See how it glitters with burnished worlds, more numerous than the dust of earth. All are in motion. With a velocity which outstrips the wind, they wheel their flight around their vast orbits, with a precision which astonishes and confounds the beholder. Yonder rolls the planet Jupiter. Could I put my finger down at a certain point in its orbit, as it rushes past, it might exclaim—"Although the journey around the orbit in which I revolve, is two thousand nine hundred and sixty-six millions six hundred and sixty-one thousand miles, yet in four thousand three hundred and thirty-two days, fourteen hours, eighteen minutes, and forty-one seconds, I will pass this point again!!" And away it flies to fulfil the grand prophecy. I watch with intense interest for more than eleven years. At length they have expired. The days also run by—the hours pass—the minutes. And as the clock ticks the forty-first second, lo! old Jupiter wheels past the given point, without the variation of the

thousandth part of a moment. Thus it has been journeying from the morning of creation. Thus perfectly revolve all the heavenly bodies.

> "Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
> Deep felt, in these appear! A single train,
> Yet so delightful mixed, with such kind art,
> Such beauty and beneficence combin'd;
> Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade;
> And all so forming an harmonious whole;
> That as they still succeed, they ravish still."

In the magnitude of the heavenly bodies, and the precision of their movements, we behold the most glorious and convincing evidences of the omnipotence of God's power, and the perfection of His wisdom and skill. In the splendor of the starry dome of night —in the thousand attractions of our earthly abode—the loveliness of its summer landscapes—the beauty of its flowers, and the balmy fragrance they distil upon the air—in the warmth of the precious sunlight, which floods hill, valley, field, forest, and ocean—in the refreshing influences of the evening dew, and "the early and latter rains"—in the

grateful breeze which bears life and health to our nostrils—in the rich productions of the ever-bountiful soil—in these, in all nature's wide departments, we read, with rejoicing eyes, the witnesses of the impartial goodness and boundless beneficence of the Father of spirits!

> "My heart is awed within me, when I think
> Of the great miracle that still goes on,
> In silence, round me—the perpetual work
> Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
> Forever. Written on thy works I read
> The lesson of thy Eternity."

Nature furnishes a thousand evidences of man's immortality—that greatest of all truths asserted by revelation, and sustained by religion. We see a corroboration of this momentous fact, in the transformation of the loathsome caterpillar into the beautiful butterfly, by the process of an actual death—in the dying and reviving of the vegetable kingdom—in the luxuriant plant and golden harvest, springing from the dead body of the seed—in the numerous forms and processes in which life springs from death all around us.

"Oh, listen, man,
A voice within us speaks the startling word,
'Man, thou shalt never die!' Celestial voices
Hymn it round our souls; according harps,
By angel fingers touched when the mild stars
Of morning sang together, sounds forth still
The song of our great immortality;
Thick-clustering orbs, and this our fair domain,
The tall, dark mountains, and the deep-toned seas,
Join in the solemn, universal song.
O, listen, ye, our spirits; drink it in
From all the air! 'Tis in the gentle moonlight:
Is floating in day's setting glories; Night,
Wrapped in her sable robe, with silent step
Comes to our bed and breathes it in our ears.
Night and the dawn, bright day and thoughtful eve,
All times, all bounds, the limitless expanse,
As one great mystic instrument, are touched
By an unseen, living Hand, and conscious chords
Quiver with joy in this great jubilee.
The dying hear it; and as sounds of earth
Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls
To mingle in this passing melody."*

Still more valuable resources for the attainment of religious truths are found in the holy Scriptures—the revealed word of the Most High. In forming their religious opinions, let the young fail not to make these sacred pages their constant study. Nor should they dream they will find there any contra-

* Dana.

diction to the lessons read on the broad pages of Nature's book. These are but different methods in which the same God reveals himself to his creatures. He will not contradict himself. His revealed word as plainly asserts his power, wisdom, and goodness, as his works shadow forth these glorious perfections. While the Scriptures do not contradict the voice uttered by nature, they lead us to higher departments of religion, and to clearer revelations of God and his character. They represent him as a Father, exercising a parental government over man—a government characterized by benevolence, justice, mercy, and truth, and administered for the promotion of his own glory, and the highest good of those called to obey. The Scriptures, moreover, bring to our knowledge the Son of God and his gospel—presenting us in the life of Jesus Christ, a beautiful example of truth, purity, righteousness, and love, and imparting, in his teachings, the most perfect rules of human conduct, and the brightest anticipations of life and immortality beyond the grave.

In perusing the Scriptures, let reason be your guide. Reason should not be elevated above the Scriptures; yet they cannot be understood without its aid. The Creator, in the Bible, addresses himself directly to man's reason: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."* Without the exercise of reason in reading the Bible, it will be as a sealed book. How else can man comprehend its truths, and be instructed by its rich lessons of wisdom? In the exercise of this highest capacity bestowed upon us, the word of God will appear harmonious in all its parts—beautiful and sublime in all its truths—instructive in all its lessons—inspiring the brightest, broadest hopes the mind can conceive. But lay reason aside, in its perusal, and it will be involved in inextricable confusion, and impenetrable darkness.

The young should not lose sight of the fact, that we have the Bible only in the form of a translation by uninspired men, from the original Hebrew and Greek, in which it was

* Isaiah i. 18.

penned by the inspired writers. Hence it should not seem surprising that there are some inaccuracies connected with this translation; nor that certain words, allusions, and forms of speech, appear obscure and unintelligible. There is a plain and simple rule by which all obscure and disputed words and passages should be understood. Give them such construction as will most perfectly correspond with the attributes and character of God, as revealed in his word and works, his omnipotence and omniscience, his wisdom and goodness, his justice and mercy—and as will best accord with the grace and love which moved the Saviour in his divine mission to the earth.

For the following excellent suggestions in regard to the study of the Scriptures, I am indebted to a popular writer of the present day.

"On the Sabbath the Bible should be *studied*. Every person, old or young, ignorant or learned, should devote a portion of time every Sabbath to the *study* of the

Scriptures, in the more strict and proper sense of that term. But to show precisely what I mean by this weekly study of the Bible, I will describe a particular case. A young man with only such opportunities as are possessed by all, resolves to take this course. He selects the Epistle to the Ephesians for his first subject; he obtains such books and helps as he finds in his own family, or as he can obtain from a religious friend, or procure from a Sabbath-school library. It is not too much to suppose that he will have a sacred Atlas, some Commentary, and probably a Bible Dictionary. He should also have pen, ink, and paper; and thus provided, he sits down Sabbath morning to his work. He raises a short but heartfelt prayer to God that he will assist and bless him, and then commences his inquiries.

"The Epistle to the Ephesians I have supposed to be his subject. He sees that the first question evidently is, '*Who were the Ephesians?*' He finds the city of Ephesus upon the map; and from the preface to the

Epistle contained in the commentary, or from any other source to which he can have access, he learns what sort of a city it was—what was the character of the inhabitants, and if possible, what condition the city was in at the time this letter was written. He next inquires in regard to the writer of this letter or Epistle, as it is called. It was Paul; and what did Paul know of the Ephesians? had he ever been there? or was he writing to strangers? To settle these points, so evidently important to a correct understanding of the letter, he examines the Acts of the Apostles, (in which an account of St. Paul's labors is contained,) to learn whether Paul went there, and if so, what happened while he was there. He finds that many interesting incidents occurred during Paul's visits, and his curiosity is excited to know whether these things will be alluded to in the letter; he also endeavors to ascertain where Paul was when he wrote the letter. After having thus determined everything relating to the circumstances of the case, he is

prepared to come to the Epistle itself, and enter with spirit and interest into an examination of its contents.

"He first glances his eye cursorily through the chapters of the book, that he may take in at once a general view of its object and design—perhaps he makes out a brief list of the topics discussed, and thus has a distinct general idea of the whole before he enters into a minute examination of the parts. This minute examination he comes to at last—though perhaps the time devoted to the study for *two or three* Sabbaths is spent in the preparatory inquiries. If it is so, it is time well spent; for by it he is now prepared to enter with interest into the very soul and spirit of the letter. While he was ignorant of these points, his knowledge of the Epistle itself must have been very vague and superficial. Suppose I were now to introduce into this book a letter, and should begin at once, without saying by whom the letter was written, or to whom it was addressed. It would be preposterous. If I

wished to excite your interest, I should describe particularly the parties, and the circumstances which produced the letter originally. And yet how many Christians there are, who could not tell whether Paul's letter to the Ephesians was written before or after he went there, or where Titus was when Paul wrote to him, or for what special purpose he wrote!

"This method of studying the Scriptures, which I have thus attempted to describe, and which I might illustrate by supposing many other cases, is not intended for one class alone; not for the ignorant peculiarly, nor for the wise; not for the rich, nor for the poor; but for all. The solitary widow, in her lonely cottage among the distant mountains, with nothing but her simple Bible in her hand, by the light of her evening fire, may pursue this course of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and entering into the spirit of sacred story, throwing herself back to ancient times, and thus preparing herself to grasp more completely, and to feel more

vividly the moral lessons which the Bible is mainly intended to teach. And the most cultivated scholar may pursue this course in his quiet study, surrounded by all the helps to a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures which learning can produce or wealth obtain.

"I hope the specimens I have given are sufficient to convey to my readers the general idea I have in view, when I speak of *studying* the Bible, in contradistinction from the mere cursory reading of it, which is so common among Christians.

"Select some subject upon which a good deal of information may be found in various parts of the Bible, and make it your object to bring together into one view all that the Bible says upon that subject. Take for instance the life of the Apostle Peter. Suppose you make it your business on one Sabbath, with the help of a brother, or sister, or any other friend who will unite with you in the work, to obtain all the information which the Bible gives in regard to him. By the help of the Concordance you find all the

places in which he is mentioned—you compare the various accounts in the Four Gospels; see in what they agree and in what they differ. After following down his history as far as the Evangelists bring it, you take up the book of the Acts, and go through that for information in regard to this Apostle, omitting those parts which relate to other subjects. In this way you become fully acquainted with his character and history; you understand it as a whole.

"*Jerusalem* is another good subject, and the examination would afford scope for the exercise of the faculties of the highest minds for many Sabbaths: find when the city is first named, and from the manner in which it is mentioned, and the circumstances connected with the earliest accounts of it, ascertain what sort of a city it was at that time. Then follow its history down; notice the changes as they occur; understand every revolution, examine the circumstances of every battle and siege of which it is the scene, and thus become acquainted with its

whole story down to the time when the sacred narration leaves it. To do this well, will require patient and careful investigation. You cannot do it as you can read a chapter, carelessly and with an unconcerned and uninterested mind; you must, if you would succeed in such an investigation, engage in it *in earnest.* And that is the very advantage of such a method of study; it breaks up effectually that habit of listless, dull, inattentive reading of the Bible which so extensively prevails.

"You may take the subject of the *Sabbath;* examine the circumstances of its first appointment, and then follow its history down, so far as it is given in the Bible, to the last Sabbath alluded to on the sacred pages.

"The variety of topics which might profitably be studied in this way is vastly greater than would at first be supposed. There are a great number of biographical and geographical topics—a great number which relate to manners, and customs, and sacred in-

structions. In fact, the whole Bible may be analyzed in this way, and its various contents brought before the mind in new aspects, and with a freshness and vividness which, in the mere repeated reading of the Scriptures in regular course, can never be seen."*

In connection with this general subject, I would make a few suggestions to the young, in regard to those who differ from them on religious doctrines. That there should be a diversity of opinions in respect to a subject so purely speculative as religion, should not be a matter of surprise. Indeed, when the disparity in strength of mind, intelligence, discrimination, early instruction, and educational bias, which prevails in society, is taken into consideration, it would be singular if religious differences did not exist. Our civil institutions and laws, guaranteeing unto every individual unlimited freedom of opinion, encourage investigations which tend, for a definite period at least, to produce these differences.

* Abbott's Young Christian.

There are not a few who view with alarm the multiplicity of religious doctrines and sects, which prevails in our day. They are disposed to look upon it as an imperfection in our institutions, or as a token of the degeneracy of our age; and they fear that the most disastrous consequences will flow from it to Christianity. I cannot but view these apprehensions as groundless. They seem to grow out of a singular want of knowledge of the organism of the human mind. Moreover, they indicate an erroneous conception of the inherent power of truth; and a marvellous lack of confidence in the self-sustaining capacity of the Christian religion. If Christianity cannot exist and progress among men without chaining the human mind in bondage, stifling all research, and forbidding a critical investigation of doctrines put forth in its name, then it must at length become extinct. Men will and must think, reason, investigate, on religious subjects, as well as other topics, whatever result may follow. I cherish, however, none of these fears. The multiplicity

of denominations, and the diversity of opinions, can work no serious injury to religion. The discussions, researches, and critical examinations, which necessarily grow out of this state of things, will but sift error from truth; and result, ultimately, in laying broader and deeper the foundations of pure Christianity in human society; bringing out its highest excellencies and beauties to the admiration of men, and elevating it far above the poisoned arrows of scepticism. It is the errors engrafted on Christianity, in dark and ignorant ages, that have given the infidel all his weapons of attack. When these errors shall at length all be detected and expunged by candid research, and faithful investigation, the shafts of the sceptic will fall harmless at the base of the graceful and glorious temple of Christ's religion. In the words of John Milton—"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously * * * to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put

to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

What line of conduct should the young adopt towards those who differ from them on religious doctrines?

In the first place, let it never be forgotten that others have the same civil, moral, and religious right to differ in sentiment from you, that you have from them. This right is recognized by our republican government, and is sanctioned by the gospel. One of the directions of the Saviour is, that men should "search the Scriptures."* There would be no propriety in this commandment, had not individuals the right to understand the teachings of the Scriptures, according to their best judgment, with the light they possess. Moreover, Protestantism allows among its first principles, the legitimate right of individual interpretation of the Scriptures, and private judgment in religious matters. It was for this right that Luther and Zuinglius, Melancthon and Calvin, and all the Refor-

* John v. 39.

mers, contended against the arrogant assumption of the Roman Church. That Church insisted that the people were not to understand the Scriptures for themselves, but were bound to receive, unquestioned, such interpretations as the bishop or priest should teach them. Whoever deny freedom of opinion, in regard to religion, to all men, clearly violate the spirit of the gospel, the recognized rights conferred by the Protestant religion, and the sanctions of our political institutions.

Admitting then, as you must, the privilege of others to differ from you in religious sentiment, you should not allow that difference to be a matter of offence. It should be no disparagement in your view, nor lessen them in your estimation. However great you may consider the errors of your neighbors, if you are satisfied they are *sincere*, you should respect them for their sincerity! Hypocrisy, in every form, should be denounced. Those who profess to believe what they do not, or to be what they are not—who assume the

Christian name when they are in fact, but bitter and narrow-minded bigots—are only worthy to be heartily despised.

Let me caution the young, also, against a spirit of exclusiveness. In our age and country, a religious aristocracy is no more to be acknowledged than a political. All denominations stand on an *equality*, in their rights and privileges, and in the estimation in which they are to be held as public bodies. No sect can put on airs, and assume to lord it over others, in any respect whatever, without subjecting itself to the severest censure. Among the rights belonging equally to all, is the Christian name. Every denomination which receives the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, and believes in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, is justly entitled to the name of *Christian*, and to be acknowledged and treated as such. This is the only test laid down in the New Testament, as a careful examination will satisfy the candid mind.

For any one sect to attempt to monopolize

the Christian name, and assume that all the piety, godliness, and virtue in the land, is to be found in its borders alone, is to place itself in a most ridiculous position. A pretence so arrogant and groundless, in our enlightened day, can have no other effect than to excite a smile of pity on the countenance of sincere and candid Christians. I would have the young give no countenance to these pretensions; but seek to attain to higher and nobler principles. Let them place sectarian bitterness and prejudice beneath their feet, and imbibe enough of the Christian spirit to acknowledge freely, that, in all denominations, good and pious people can be found.

In estimating those of other views, the young should avoid denouncing a whole denomination, and condemning their doctrines as demoralizing, because some corrupt men may have been found in their midst. If this rule of judging was generally adopted, where is there a class of Christians which could stand? Were there not among the chosen twelve of our Saviour, a Judas to

betray him, and a Peter to deny him with oaths? Shall we, therefore, insist that Christianity is false and corrupting? There are few sects in the land, which have not had both clergymen and church-members guilty of the most corrupt practices. Are we to conclude from this, that the doctrines of those who have had these unworthy members, are false and licentious? Who are willing to adopt this test? A denomination cannot consistently apply a test to others which they are not willing to abide by themselves.

Candor will lead all upright minds to acknowledge that corrupt men will find their way into every sect, and that it is manifestly wrong to judge of the whole body by this class. To decide of the practical tendencies of different and conflicting doctrines, seek to understand their effect on the great mass of those who receive them. Do they influence them to honesty, industry, benevolence and neighborly kindness? Do they inspire respect for the rights and interest of fellow-beings? Do they open the ear to the cry

of poverty and want? Do they lead to a love supreme to God, and to our neighbor as ourselves? These are the legitimate fruits of Christianity. Where they abound, you need not doubt the spirit of Christ prevails, and that the truths of his gospel are in the midst of such a people.

I would exhort the young to respect religion, in whatever form they find it, and to have a high and just regard for the rights and feelings of professing Christians of every class. In this, as in all things else, be governed by the Redeemer's golden rule—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

Amid the multiplicity of sects and doctrines, let every youth search for religious truth, as the "pearl of great price!" Be careful that your researches are in the right direction—not downward to the dark and mysterious of past and ignorant ages, but upward to the bright, the simple, and glorious. Ever seek for expansive and enlightened conceptions of God, his character and pur-

poses—of Christ, his gospel and its results—of man, his nature, his high relationship, his duty and destiny. The more elevated and comprehensive your views on these subjects, the more exalted will be your feelings and principles of action; and the better will you be prepared to live a life of purity and usefulness, and to die triumphing in the brightest and sweetest hopes of immortal light and happiness.

In concluding this subject, I would call attention to the following suggestions of several able writers, in regard to Religion and its influence on its possessors:—

"In the great and universal concern of religion, both sexes, and all ranks are equally interested. The truly catholic spirit of Christianity accommodates itself, with an astonishing condescension, to the circumstances of the whole human race. It rejects none on account of their pecuniary wants, their personal infirmities, or their intellectual deficiencies. No superiority of parts is the least recommendation, nor is any depression of fortune

the smallest objection. None are too wise to be excused from performing the duties of religion, nor are any too poor to be excluded from the consolations of its promises.

"If we admire the wisdom of God in having furnished different degrees of intelligence, so exactly adapted to their different conditions, and in having fitted every part of this stupendous work, not only to serve its own immediate purpose, but also to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole; how much more ought we to adore that goodness which has perfected the divine plan, by appointing one wide and comprehensive means of salvation: a salvation which all are invited to partake; by a means which all are capable of using; which nothing but voluntary blindness can prevent our comprehending, and nothing but wilful error can hinder us from embracing.

"The muses are coy, and will only be wooed and won by some highly-favored suitors. The sciences are lofty, and will not stoop to the reach of ordinary capacities. But 'wisdom

(by which the royal preacher means piety) is a loving spirit; she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of all such as seek her.' Nay, she is so accessible and condescending, 'that she preventeth them that desire her, making herself first known unto them.'

"We are told by the same animated writer, 'that wisdom is the breath of the power of God.' How infinitely superior in grandeur and sublimity, is this description to the origin of the *wisdom* of the heathens, as described by their poets and mythologists! In the exalted strains of the Hebrew poetry, we read, that 'wisdom is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.'

"The philosophical author of 'The Defence of Learning,' observes, that knowledge has something of venom and malignity in it, when taken without its proper corrective; and what that is, the inspired St. Paul teaches us, by placing it as the immediate antidote—

'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.' Perhaps it is the vanity of human wisdom, unchastised by this correcting principle, which has made so many infidels. It may proceed from the arrogance of a self-sufficient pride, that some philosophers disdain to acknowledge their belief in a Being who has judged proper to conceal from them the infinite wisdom of his counsels; who (to borrow the lofty language of the man of Uz) refused to consult them when he laid the foundations of the earth, when he shut up the sea with doors, and made the clouds the garment thereof.

"A man must be an infidel either from pride, prejudice, or bad education; he cannot be one unawares, or by surprise; for infidelity is not occasioned by sudden impulse or violent temptation. He may be hurried by some vehement desire into an immoral action, at which he will blush in his cooler moments, and which he will lament as the sad effect of a spirit unsubdued by religion; but infidelity is a calm, considerate act, which cannot plead

the weakness of the heart, or the seduction of the senses. Even good men frequently fail in their duty through the infirmities of nature and the allurements of the world; but the infidel errs on a plan, on a settled and deliberate principle.

"But though the minds of men are sometimes fatally infected with this disease, either through unhappy prepossession, or some of the other causes above-mentioned, yet I am unwilling to believe that there is in nature so monstrously incongruous a being as a *female* infidel. The least reflection on the temper, the character, and the education of women, makes the mind revolt with horror from an idea so improbable and so unnatural.

"May I be allowed to observe that, in general, the minds of girls seem more aptly prepared in their early youth for the reception of serious impressions than those of the other sex, and that their less exposed situations in more advanced life qualify them better for the preservation of them! The daughters (of good parents I mean) are often more care-

fully instructed in their religious duties than the sons, and this from a variety of causes. They are not so soon sent from under the paternal eye into the bustle of the world, and so early exposed to the contagion of bad example: their hearts are naturally more flexible, soft, and liable to any kind of impression the forming hand may stamp on them; and, lastly, as they do not receive the same classical education with boys, their feeble minds are not obliged at once to receive and separate the precepts of Christianity, and the documents of pagan philosophy. The necessity of doing this perhaps somewhat weakens the serious impressions of young men, at least till the understanding is formed; and confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. They only casually read, or hear read, the Scriptures of truth, while they are obliged to learn by heart, construe, and repeat, the poetical fables of the less than human gods of the ancients. And, as the excellent author of 'The Internal Evidence of the Christian

Religion' observes, 'Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the Christian institution, as that partiality which we contract, in our earliest education, for the manners of pagan antiquity.'

"Girls, therefore, who do *not* contract this early partiality, ought to have a clearer notion of their religious duties: they are not obliged, at an age when the judgment is so weak, to distinguish between the doctrines of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Christ; and to embarrass their minds with the various morals, which were taught in the Porch, in the Academy, and on the Mount.

"It is presumed that these remarks cannot possibly be so misunderstood, as to be construed into the least disrespect to literature, or a want of the highest reverence for a learned education, the basis of all elegant knowledge: they are only intended, with all proper deference, to point out to young women that, however inferior their advantages of acquiring a knowledge of the belles-lettres are to those of the other sex, yet it depends

on themselves not to be surpassed in this most important of all studies, for which their abilities are equal, and their opportunities perhaps greater.

"But the mere exemption from infidelity is so small a part of the religious character, that I hope no one will attempt to claim any merit from this negative sort of goodness, or value herself merely for not being the very worst thing she possibly can be. Let no mistaken girl fancy she gives a proof of her wit by her want of piety, or that a contempt of things serious and sacred will exalt her understanding, or raise her character even in the opinion of the most avowed male infidels. For one may venture to affirm, that with all their profligate ideas, both of women and religion, neither Bolingbroke, Wharton, Buckingham, or even Lord Chesterfield himself, would have esteemed a woman the more for her being irreligious.

"With whatever ridicule a polite freethinker may affect to treat religion himself, he will think it necessary his wife should

entertain different notions of it. He may pretend to despise it as a matter of opinion, depending on creeds and systems; but, if he is a man of sense, he will know the value of it as a governing principle, which is to influence her conduct and direct her action. If he sees her unaffectedly sincere in the practice of her religious duties, it will be a secret pledge to him that she will be equally exact in fulfilling the conjugal; for he can have no reasonable dependence on her attachment to *him*, if he has no opinion of her fidelity to God; for she who neglects first duties, gives but an indifferent proof of her disposition to fill up inferior ones; and how can a man of any understanding (whatever his own religious professions may be) trust that woman with the cares of his family, and the education of his children, who wants herself the best incentive to a virtuous life, the belief that she is an accountable creature, and the reflection that she has an immortal soul?

"Cicero spoke it as the highest commendation of Cato's character, that he embraced

philosophy, not for the sake of *disputing* like a philosopher, but of *living* like one. The chief purpose of Christian knowledge is to promote the great end of a Christian life. Every rational woman should, no doubt, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in her; but this knowledge is best acquired, and the duties consequent on it best performed, by reading books of plain piety and practical devotion, and not by entering into the endless feuds, and engaging in the unprofitable contentions of partial controversialists. Nothing is more unamiable than the narrow spirit of party zeal, nor more disgusting than to hear a woman deal out judgments, and denounce vengeance, against any one who happens to differ from her in some opinion, perhaps of no real importance, and which, it is probable, she may be just as wrong in rejecting, as the object of her censure is in embracing. A furious and unmerciful female bigot wanders as far beyond the limits prescribed to her sex, as a Thalestris or a Joan d'Arc. Violent debate has made

as few converts as the sword;—and both these instruments are particularly unbecoming when wielded by a female hand.

"But, though no one will be frightened out of their opinions, yet they may be persuaded out of them; they may be touched by the affecting earnestness of serious conversation, and allured by the attractive beauty of a consistently serious life. And while a young woman ought to dread the name of a wrangling polemic, it is her duty to aspire after the honourable character of a sincere Christian. But this dignified character she can by no means deserve, if she is ever afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them. A profligate, who makes it a point to ridicule everything which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, will be disconcerted at the spirited, yet modest rebuke of a pious young woman. But there is as much efficacy in the manner of reproving profaneness, as in the words. If she corrects it with moroseness, she defeats the effect of her remedy by her unskilful

manner of administering it. If, on the other hand, she affects to defend the insulted cause of God in a faint tone of voice, and studied ambiguity of phrase, or with an air of levity, and a certain expression of pleasure in her eyes, which proves she is secretly delighted with what she pretends to censure, she injures religion much more than he did who publicly profaned it; for she plainly indicates, either that she does not believe or respect what she professes. The other attacked it as an open foe; she betrays it as a false friend. No one pays any regard to the opinion of an avowed enemy; but the desertion or treachery of a professed friend is dangerous indeed!"

"A desire after happiness is inseparable from the human mind. It is the natural and healthy craving of our spirit; an appetite which we have neither will nor power to destroy, and for which all mankind are busily employed in making provision. This is as natural, as for birds to fly, or fishes to swim. For this the scholar and the philoso-

pher, who think it consists in knowledge, pore over their books and their apparatus, light the midnight lamp, and keep frequent vigils, when the world around them is asleep. For this the warrior, who thinks that happiness is inseparably united with fame, pursues that bubble through the gory field of conflict, and is as lavish of his life, as if it were not worth a soldier's pay. The worldling, with whom happiness and *wealth* are kindred terms, worships daily at the shrine of Mammon, and offers earnest prayers for the golden shower. The voluptuary gratifies every craving sense, rejoices in the midnight revel, renders himself vile, and yet tells you he is in the chase of happiness. The ambitious man, conceiving that the great desideratum blossoms on the sceptre, and hangs in rich clusters from the throne, consumes one half of his life, and embitters the other half, in climbing the giddy elevation of royalty. All these, however, have confessed their disappointment; and have retired from the stage exclaiming, in reference to happiness, what

Brutus, just before he stabbed himself, did in reference to virtue, 'I have pursued thee everywhere, and found thee nothing but a name.' This, however, is a mistake; for both virtue and happiness are glorious realities, and if they are not found, it is merely because they are not sought from the right sources.

"1. That religion is pleasure, will appear, if you consider what part of our nature it more particularly employs and gratifies.

"It is not the gratification of the *senses*, or of the animal part of our nature, but a provision for *the immaterial and immortal mind.* The mind of man is an image not only of God's spirituality, but of his infinity. It is not like the senses, limited to this or that kind of object; as the sight intermeddles not with that which affects the smell; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon, and takes them all in. It is, as I may say, an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. Now this is that part of

man to which the exercises of religion properly belong. The pleasures of the understanding, in the contemplation of truth, have been sometimes so great, so intense, so engrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other kind of pleasure. How short of this are the delights of the epicure! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and of the thinking man! Indeed, says Dr. South, as different as the silence of an Archimides in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a swine at her wash. Nothing is comparable to the pleasures of mind; these are enjoyed by the spirits above, by Jesus Christ, and the great and blessed God.

"Think what objects religion brings before the mind, as the sources of its pleasure: no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature and in his works. For the eye of religion, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior nor an equal. The mind is conversant, in the exercises of

piety, with all the most stupendous events that have ever occurred in the history of the universe, or that ever will transpire till the close of time. The creation of the world; its government by a universal Providence; its redemption by the death of Christ; its conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost; the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the certainty of an eternal existence; the secrets of the unseen state; subjects, all of them of the loftiest and sublimest kind, which have engaged the inquiries of the profoundest intellects, are the matter of contemplation to real piety. What topics are these for our reason, under the guidance of religion, to study: what an ocean to swim in, what a heaven to soar in: what heights to measure, what depths to fathom. Here are subjects, which, from their infinite vastness, must be ever new, and ever fresh; which can be never laid aside as dry or empty. If novelty is the parent of pleasure, here it may be found; for although the subject itself is the same, some new view of it,

some fresh discovery of its wonders, is ever bursting upon the mind of the devout and attentive inquirer after truth.

"How then can religion be otherwise than pleasant, when it is the exercise of the noble faculties of the mind, upon the sublimest topics of mental investigation; the voluntary, excursive, endless pursuits of the human understanding in the region of eternal truth. Never was there a more interesting or important inquiry than that proposed by Pilate to the illustrious Prisoner at his bar; and if the latter thought it not proper to answer it, it was not to show that the question was insignificant, but to condemn the light and flippant manner in which a subject so important was taken up. Religion can answer the question, and with an ecstasy greater than that of the ancient Mathematician, exclaims, 'I have found it: I have found it.' The Bible is not only true, but TRUTH. It contains that which deserves this sublime emphasis. It settles the disputes of ages, and of philosophers, and makes known what

is truth, and where it is to be found. It brings us from amongst the quicksands and shelves, and rocks of skepticism, ignorance, and error, and shows us that goodly land, in quest of which myriads of minds have sailed, and multitudes have been wrecked; and religion is setting our foot on this shore, and dwelling in the region of eternal truth.

"2. That a religious life is pleasant, is evident from the nature of religion itself.

"Religion is a principle of *spiritual life* in the soul. Now all the exercises and acts of vitality are agreeable. To see, to hear, to taste, to walk, are all agreeable, because they are the voluntary energies of inward life. So religion, in all its duties, is the exercise of a living principle in the soul: it is a new spiritual existence. Piety is a spiritual *taste.* Hence it is said, 'If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious.' No matter what the object of a taste is, the exercises of it are always agreeable. The painter goes with delight to his picture; the musician to his instrument; the sculptor to his bust; because

they have a *taste* for these pursuits. The same feeling of delight attends the Christian to the exercises of godliness: and this is his language, 'It is a good thing to give thanks, and to draw near to God. O how I love thy law! it is sweeter to my taste than honey. How amiable are thy tabernacles.' Religion, where it is real, is the natural element of a Christian; and every creature rejoices in its own appropriate sphere. If you consider true piety with disgust, as a hard, unnatural, involuntary thing, you are totally ignorant of its nature, entirely destitute of its influence, and no wonder you cannot attach to it the idea of pleasure: but viewing it as it ought to be viewed, in the light of a new nature, you will perceive that it admits of most exalted delight.

"3. Consider the miseries which it prevents.

"It does not, it is true, prevent sickness, poverty, or misfortune: it does not fence off from the wilderness of this world, a mystic enclosure, within which the ills of life never

intrude. No; these things happen to all alike; but how small a portion of human wretchedness flows from these sources, compared with that which arises from the dispositions of the heart. 'The mind is its own place, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.' Men carry the springs of their happiness or misery in their own bosom. Hence it is said of the wicked, 'that they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, which is never at peace, but continually casting up mire and dirt.' In contrast with which, it is affirmed that 'the work of righteousness is peace; and that the good man shall be satisfied from himself.' Would you behold the misery entailed by *pride*, look at Haman; by *covetousness*, look at Ahab; by *malice*, look at Cain; by *profaneness* and *sensuality*, united with the forebodings of a guilty conscience, look at Belshazzar; by *envy*, and a consciousness of being rejected of God, look at Saul; by *revenge*, look at Herodias writhing beneath the accusations of John, and thirsting for his blood; by *apostasy*, look at

Judas. Religion would have prevented all this, and it will prevent similar misery in you. Hearken to the confessions of the outcast in the land of his banishment; of the felon in his irons, and in his dungeon; of the prostitute expiring upon her bed of straw; of the malefactor at the gallows—'Wretched creature that I am, abhorred of men, accursed of God! To what have my crimes brought me!' Religion prevents all this: all that wretchedness which is the result of crime, is cut off by the influence of genuine piety. Misery prevented is happiness gained.

"4. Consider the consolations it imparts.

"Our world has been called, in the language of poetry, a vale of tears, and human life a bubble, raised from those tears, and inflated by sighs, which, after floating a little while, decked with a few gaudy colors, is touched by the hand of death, and dissolves. Poverty, disease, misfortune, unkindness, inconstancy, death, all assail the travellers as they journey onward to eternity through

this gloomy valley; and what is to comfort them but *religion?*

"The consolations of religion are neither few nor small; they arise in part from those things which we have already mentioned in this chapter; *i. e.* from the exercise of the understanding on the revealed truths of God's word, from the impulses of the spiritual life within us, and from a reflection upon our spiritual privileges; but there are some others, which, though partially implied in these things, deserve a special enumeration and distinct consideration.

"*A good conscience*, which the wise man says is a perpetual feast, sustains a high place amongst the comforts of genuine piety. It is unquestionably true, that a man's happiness is in the keeping of his conscience; all the sources of his felicity are under the command of this faculty. 'A wounded spirit who can bear?' A troubled conscience converts a paradise into a hell, for it is the flame of hell kindled on earth; but a quiet conscience would illuminate the horrors of

the deepest dungeon with the beams of heavenly day; the former has often rendered men like tormented fiends amidst an elysium of delights, while the latter has taught the songs of cherubim to martyrs in the prison or the flames.

"In addition to this, religion comforts the mind, with the assurance of an all-wise, all-pervading Providence, so minute in its superintendence and control, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father: a superintendence which is excluded from no point of space, no moment of time, and overlooks not the meanest creature in existence. Nor is this all; for the Word of God assures the believer that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.' Nothing that imagination could conceive, is more truly consolatory than this, to be assured that all things, however painful at the time, not excepting the failure of our favorite schemes, the disappointment of our fondest hopes, the

loss of our dearest comforts, shall be overruled by infinite wisdom for the promotion of our ultimate good. This is a spring of comfort whose waters never fail.

"Religion consoles also by making manifest some of the benefits of affliction, even at the time it is endured. It crucifies the world, mortifies sin, quickens prayer, extracts the balmy sweets of the promises, endears the Saviour; and, to crown all, it directs the mind to that glorious state, where the days of our mourning shall be ended: that happy country where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying. Nothing so composes the mind, and helps it to bear the load of trouble which God may lay upon it, as the near prospect of its termination. Religion shows the weather-beaten mariner the haven of eternal repose, where no storms arise, and the sea is ever calm; it exhibits to the weary traveller the city of habitation, within whose walls he will find a pleasant home, rest from his labors, and friends to welcome his arrival; it dis-

closes to the wounded warrior his native country, where the alarms of war, and the dangers of conflict, will be no more encountered, but undisturbed peace forever reign. In that one word, HEAVEN, religion provides a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care.

"Here, then, is the pleasure of that wisdom which is from above; it is not only enjoyed in prosperity, but continues to refresh us, and most powerfully to refresh us, in adversity; a remark which will not apply to any other kind of pleasure."*

"In many persons, a seriousness and sense of awe overspread the imagination, whenever the idea of the Supreme Being is presented to their thoughts. This effect, which forms a considerable security against vice, is the consequence not so much of reflection as of habit; which habit being generated by the external expressions of reverence which we use ourselves, or observe in others, may be

* Christian Father's Present.

destroyed by causes opposite to these, and especially by that familiar levity with which some learn to speak of the Deity, of his attributes, providence, revelations or worship.

"God hath been pleased (no matter for what reason, although probably for this,) to forbid the vain mention of his name:—'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' Now the mention is *vain* when it is useless; and it is useless when it is neither likely nor intended to serve any good purpose; as when it flows from the lips idle and unmeaning, or is applied, on occasions inconsistent with any consideration of religion and devotion, to express our anger, our earnestness, our courage, or our mirth; or indeed when it is used at all, except in acts of religion, or in serious and seasonable discourse upon religious subjects.

"The prohibition of the third commandment is recognized by Christ in his sermon upon the mount; which sermon adverts to none but the moral parts of the Jewish law: 'I say unto you, swear not at all: but let

your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.' The Jews probably interpreted the prohibition as restrained to the name JEHOVAH, the name which the Deity had appointed and appropriated to himself; Exod. vi. 3. The words of Christ extend the prohibition beyond the *name* of God, to everything associated with the idea:—'Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is God's footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." Matt. v. 35.

"The offence of profane swearing is aggravated by the consideration, that in *it* duty and decency are sacrificed to the slenderest of temptations. Suppose the habit, either from affectation, or by negligence and inadvertency, to be already formed, it must always remain within the power of the most ordinary resolution to correct it: and it cannot, one would think, cost a great deal to relinquish the pleasure and honor which it confers. A concern for duty is in fact never

strong, when the exertion requisite to vanquish a habit founded in no antecedent propensity is thought too much or too painful.

"A contempt of positive duties, or rather of those duties for which the reason is not so plain as the command, indicates a disposition upon which the authority of revelation has obtained little influence. This remark is applicable to the offence of profane swearing, and describes, perhaps pretty exactly, the general character of those who are most addicted to it.

"Mockery and ridicule, when exercised upon the Scriptures, or even upon the places, persons, and forms set apart for the ministration of religion, fall within the meaning of the law which forbids the profanation of God's name; especially as that law is extended by Christ's interpretation. They are moreover inconsistent with a religious frame of mind: for as no one ever either feels himself disposed to pleasantry, or capable of being diverted with the pleasantry of others, upon matters in which he is deeply inter-

ested; so a mind intent upon the acquisition of heaven rejects with indignation every attempt to entertain it with jests, calculated to degrade or deride subjects which it never recollects but with seriousness and anxiety. Nothing but stupidity, or the most frivolous disposition of thought, can make even the inconsiderate forget the supreme importance of everything which relates to the expectation of a future existence. Whilst the infidel mocks at the superstitions of the vulgar, insults over their credulous fears, their childish errors, or fantastic rites, it does not occur to him to observe, that the most preposterous device by which the weakest devotee ever believed he was securing the happiness of a future life, is more rational than unconcern about it. Upon this subject nothing is so absurd as indifference; no folly so contemptible as thoughtlessness and levity.

"The knowledge of what is due to the solemnity of those interests, concerning which Revelation professes to inform and direct us, may teach even those who are least inclined

to respect the prejudices of mankind, to observe a decorum in the style and conduct of religious disquisitions, with the neglect of which many adversaries of Christianity are justly chargeable. Serious arguments are fair on all sides. Christianity is but ill defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But whilst we would have freedom of inquiry restrained by no laws but those of decency, we are entitled to demand, on behalf of a religion which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning;—that the truth or falsehood of Christianity be never made a topic of raillery, a theme for the exercise of wit or eloquence, or a subject of contention for literary fame and victory;—that the cause be tried upon its merits;—that all applications to the fancy, passions or prejudices of the reader, all attempts to preoccupy, ensnare, or perplex his judgment, by any art, influence. or impression whatsoever, extrinsic

to the proper grounds and evidence upon which his assent ought to proceed, be rejected from a question which involves in its determination the hopes, the virtue, and the repose of millions;—that the controversy be managed on both sides with sincerity; that is, that nothing be produced, in the writings of either, contrary to or beyond the writer's own knowledge and persuasion;—that objections and difficulties be proposed, from no other motive than an honest and serious desire to obtain satisfaction, or to communicate information which may promote the discovery and progress of truth;—that, in conformity with this design, everything be stated with integrity, with method, precision, and simplicity; and above all, that whatever is published in opposition to received and confessedly beneficial persuasions, be set forth under a form which is likely to invite inquiry and to meet examination. If with these moderate and equitable conditions be compared the manner in which hostilities have been waged against the Christian re-

ligion, not only the votaries of the prevailing faith, but every man who looks forward with anxiety to the destination of his being, will see much to blame and to complain of. By *one unbeliever*, all the follies which have adhered in a long course of dark and superstitious ages, to the popular creed, are assumed as so many doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, for the purpose of subverting the whole system by the absurdities which it is *thus* represented to contain. By *another*, the ignorance and vices of the sacerdotal order, their mutual dissensions and persecutions, their usurpations and encroachments upon the intellectual liberty and civil rights of mankind, have been displayed with no small triumph and invective; not so much to guard the Christian laity against a repetition of the same injuries (which is the only proper use to be made of the most flagrant examples of the past,) as to prepare the way for an insinuation, that the religion itself is nothing but a profitable fable, imposed upon the fears and credulity of the multitude, and upheld

by the frauds and influence of an interested and crafty priesthood. And yet, how remotely is the character of the clergy connected with the truth of Christianity! What, after all, do the most disgraceful pages of ecclesiastical history prove, but that the passions of our common nature are not altered or excluded by distinctions of name, and that the characters of men are formed much more by the temptations than the duties of their profession? A *third* finds delight in collecting and repeating accounts of wars and massacres, of tumults and insurrections, excited in almost every age of the Christian era by religious zeal; as though the vices of Christians were parts of Christianity; intolerance and extirpation precepts of the Gospel; or as if its spirit could be judged of from the counsels of princes, the intrigues of statesmen, the pretences of malice and ambition, or the unauthorized cruelty of some gloomy and virulent superstition. By a *fourth*, the succession and variety of popular religions; the vicissitudes with which sects and tenets have

flourished and decayed; the zeal with which they were once supported, the negligence with which they are now remembered; the little share which reason and argument appear to have had in framing the creed, or regulating the religious conduct of the multitude; the indifference and submission with which the religion of the state is generally received by the common people; the caprice and vehemence with which it is sometimes opposed; the frenzy with which men have been brought to contend for opinions and ceremonies, of which they knew neither the proof, the meaning, nor the original: lastly, the equal and undoubting confidence with which we hear the doctrines of Christ or of Confucius, the law of Moses or of Mahomet, the Bible, the Koran, or the Shaster, maintained or anathematized, taught or abjured, revered or derided, according as we live on this or on that side of a river; keep within or step over the boundaries of a state; or even in the same country, and by the same people, so often as the event of a battle, or

the issue of a negotiation, delivers them to the dominion of a new master;—points, we say, of this sort are exhibited to the public attention, as so many arguments against the *truth* of the Christian religion;—and with success. For these topics being brought together, and set off with some aggravation of circumstances, and with a vivacity of style and description familiar enough to the writings and conversation of free-thinkers, insensibly lead the imagination into a habit of classing Christianity with the delusions that have taken possession, by turns, of the public belief; and of regarding it as, what the scoffers of our faith represent it to be, *the superstition of the day.* But is this to deal honestly by the subject, or with the world? May not the same things be said, may not the same prejudices be excited by these representations, whether Christianity be true or false, or by whatever proofs its truth be attested? May not truth as well as falsehood be taken upon credit? May not a religion be founded upon evidence accessible and

satisfactory to every mind competent to the inquiry, which yet, by the greatest part of its professors, is received upon authority?

"But if the *matter* of these objections be reprehensible, as calculated to produce an effect upon the reader beyond what their real weight and place in the argument deserve, still more shall we discover of management and disingenuousness in the *form* under which they are dispersed among the public. Infidelity is served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile the imagination; in a fable, a tale, a novel, a poem; in interspersed and broken hints, remote and oblique surmises; in books of travels, of philosophy, of natural history; in a word, in any form rather than the right one, that of a professed and regular disquisition. And because the coarse buffoonery and broad laugh of the old and rude adversaries of the Christian faith would offend the taste, perhaps, rather than the virtue, of this cultivated age, a graver irony, a more skilful and delicate banter is substituted in its place.

An eloquent historian, beside his more direct, and therefore fairer, attacks upon the credibility of Evangelic story, has contrived to weave into his narration one continued sneer upon the cause of Christianity, and upon the writings and characters of its ancient patrons. The knowledge which this author possesses of the frame and conduct of the human mind must have led him to observe, that such attacks do their execution without inquiry. Who can refute a *sneer?* Who can compute the number, much less, one by one, scrutinize the justice of those disparaging insinuations which crowd the pages of this elaborate history? What reader suspends his curiosity, or calls off his attention from the principal narrative, to examine references, to search into the foundation, or to weigh the reason, propriety, and force of every transient sarcasm and sly allusion, by which the Christian testimony is depreciated and traduced; and by which, nevertheless, he may find his persuasion afterwards unsettled and perplexed?"

"But the enemies of Christianity have pursued her with poisoned arrows. Obscenity itself is made the vehicle of infidelity. The fondness for ridicule is almost universal; and ridicule to many minds is never so irresistible as when seasoned with obscenity, and employed upon religion. But in proportion as these noxious principles take hold of the imagination, they infatuate the judgment; for trains of ludicrous and unchaste associations, adhering to every sentiment and mention of religion, render the mind indisposed to receive either conviction from its evidence, or impressions from its authority. And this effect, being exerted upon the sensitive part of our frame, is altogether independent of argument, proof, or reason; is as formidable to a true religion as to a false one; to a well-grounded faith as to a chimerical mythology, or fabulous tradition. Neither, let it be observed, is the crime or danger less, because impure ideas are exhibited under a veil, in covert and chastised language."

LECTURE VI.

On Marriage.

"Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—Matt. xix. 4, 5, 6.

IT is not impossible that some may doubt the propriety of introducing into the pulpit the subject which will claim our attention this evening. Marriage is a topic of so much every-day conversation; it is so often and habitually treated as a light and trivial affair—forming as it does, in every circle of society, a standing matter for jest and laughter, for tattle and gossip—that many are surprised at the idea

of treating it in a thoughtful and serious manner. So far from this being an objection, it is an urgent reason for presenting this subject under the sedate influences of this place and occasion. I would bring out the important event of Marriage, from amid the frivolity with which it is usually associated, and present it in its real and true aspect—as a topic demanding the most sober and mature consideration.

Marriage is a divine covenant, instituted by God himself.—"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help-meet for him." From the body of Adam, woman was formed, and given to him as a companion, a wife. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The Saviour also, in the language of the text, unqualifiedly sanctions the marriage covenant, and adopts

it as one of the sacred institutions of the Christian dispensation.

The marriage relation is vitally connected with the highest interests of human society. It restrains, purifies, elevates mankind. It is the great preserver of morality and religion; and forms one of the most effective of the influences which prevent the world from being deluged with licentiousness, and every loathsome form of evil. All the comforts of domestic life—the sacred and deathless ties of the family circle—the dear delights, the cherished associations, the hallowed memories of the paternal fireside—spring directly from the marriage state. It is this alone that gives us the home of our childhood, the love, the protection, the wise counsel and advice of parents. It is this that affords the sacred retreat in mature days, where, from the strifes, and cares, and bitter disappointments of the business mart, the husband and father can retire, and amid the soothing attentions and the unbought love of wife and children, renew his strength and

courage for future struggles. It is this that furnishes the aged patriarch and the venerable matron, with the safe covert, the quiet refuge, the warm, snug corner, where they can pass the winter of life, surrounded by children and children's children, who delight to rise up and do them reverence, and minister to their comforts.

> "Domestic happiness! thou only bliss
> Of paradise that hath survived the fall!
> * * * * * * *
> Thou art the nurse of virtue; in thine arms
> She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
> Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again."

Among all nations, wherever the marriage tie is the most generally formed, and held the most sacred, there woman holds the highest position and obtains her truest estimation—there civilization and refinement—there truth, purity, fidelity, and all the virtues and graces that can adorn and elevate humanity, bloom in vigorous luxuriance. And in the same degree that this sacred relationship is neglected, and its obligations disregarded, in any

nation, do we find woman degraded, and ignorance, barbarism, sensuality and vice, in every shape, prevailing and preying on the vitals of society.

In view of these considerations, it assuredly cannot be deemed improper, in addressing the young, to call their especial attention to a subject so interesting as Marriage, and one so vitally connected with all that is valuable and sacred. Indeed any series of discourses designed to counsel them, which should omit this all-important topic, would seem to be deficient in one of the first essentials of salutary admonition.

In presenting this subject to the consideration of the youthful, I would admonish them against thoughtless engagements, and hasty marriages. A heedlessness in these matters, is fraught with dangerous consequences. Matrimony is not to be viewed as a mere joke, or frolic, to be engaged in at any moment, without forethought or preparation. It is the first great step, the most momentous event, in the life of a young couple. Their position,

their circumstances, their habits, their manner of occupying time, their prospects, all undergo an almost total change at this important era. It will be to them a source of prosperity, of peace, of the highest enjoyments, or of adversity, misfortune, wrangling, and bitter wretchedness—as they do, or do not, exercise discretion and judgment in forming the connection. No thoughtful young man, no prudent young woman, will enter into an engagement of marriage, much less consummate the act, without viewing it in all its bearings. They will maturely weigh the consequences which follow, and seriously reflect upon the new scenes, duties, responsibilities, and labors, to which it leads.

I know that to many, perhaps most of the young, the whole matter of matrimony is viewed in a light so romantic—its pathway seeming to be so in the midst of rosy clouds, so fanned by ambrosial gales, so intermixed with flowery meads and rural bowers, the songs of birds and murmuring streams—that it is exceedingly difficult for them to follow a

train of sober thought on the subject. It is important, however, that they should seek to rise above these deceptive conceptions, and take such a view of this matter, as shall approach the reality, and save them from the disappointment which so often follows this consummation of their fondest dreams.

The selection of a companion for life is a transaction altogether more serious than the young appear generally to view it. They too often forget, that from all the world, they are choosing one to walk with them in closest intimacy, during all their days; and that it depends on the wisdom of their choice, whether the journey of life shall be peaceful and pleasant, or sad and wretched. It has passed into a species of proverb, that the selection of a wife or a husband, is like purchasing a ticket in a lottery—no one knows whether a prize or a blank will be drawn. There is too much truth in this saying, as selections of husbands and wives are often made. When the young are governed in such things, by fancy rather than judgment—when they are

carried away captives by some outward, worthless attraction, rather than by solid and useful qualities—their success will, indeed, depend on blind chance. But there is no necessity for so great a hazard. A young man, or a young woman, may positively know beforehand, whether they will draw a prize or a blank. In fact, they may select the *prizes* without any mistake, and let the *blanks* go for what they are worth. Let them exercise but an ordinary degree of judgment, sound discrimination and good sense, and there will be no danger of drawing a blank.

When a young man has attained to a suitable age, and is engaged in some honest and useful occupation, whereby he is in possession of means to maintain a family, it then becomes not only a privilege, but a *duty*, to select a wife, to be the sharer of his joys and his sorrows. In making this choice, he should act calmly, deliberately, and thoughtfully. He should bear in mind that he is selecting, not for a day, or a year, but for all life. The object of his affections should be one, who

will live pleasantly with him, and make him happy, not for a few months only, but during long years to come, when the romance of marriage shall have been succeeded by the cares and struggles of maturer life. She should be one of whom he can say, in the words of the poet:—

> "Oft as clouds my path o'erspread,
> Doubtful where my steps should tread,
> She, with judgment's steady ray,
> Marks and smooths the better way."

There is no greater folly than to select a wife for mere personal beauty alone. Beauty will always have its attractions; and when connected with an amiable disposition and useful qualifications, its influence cannot be objected to. But when unaccompanied with these characteristics, its power is to be resisted, and the heart steeled against all its fascinations. The young man who permits himself to fall so desperately in love with a lady, on account of mere personal beauty, as to marry her, despite the counsel of his friends, and when he himself sees, or might see,

a sad want of other and more valuable qualifications, commits an error, the wretched effects of which will be experienced through life. When this outward beauty loses its charm and passes away, as it will in a brief space of time, what has he left? A cross-grained, ill-natured, fault-finding, petulant, selfish wife, who will prove a "thorn in his side," during all his days, rather than a loving and valuable companion.

Good looks are always attractive. But there is something still more desirable in a wife, viz., a sweet disposition and an even temper, a gentle, affectionate heart, and a well-cultivated and enlightened mind. Let young men, by all means, seek for such qualifications in those whom they would choose for their companions. In these characteristics there is a beauty and loveliness which will not fade away with the consummation of marriage; but they will grow brighter and more attractive from year to year, during all life.

Moreover, I would caution young men against allowing their hearts to be taken

captive under circumstances where they are especially exposed to deception. A young woman may exhibit a fine appearance in a ball-room—may be very attractive at a party, and cut a fashionable and dashing figure in the public streets, and still make a poor, good-for-nothing wife. These are the last places in which choice should be made of a companion, to render aid and comfort amid the struggles of life. Whenever your attention is attracted by a young lady, study her in the family circle—learn her domestic qualifications. Is she a respectful, dutiful, loving daughter? Is she a kind and affectionate sister? Does she manifest a noble, generous, friendly spirit? Does she exhibit delicacy, refinement, and purity in her tastes and manners? Is she industrious,economical, and frugal in her habits? Will she be likely to assist you in husbanding your income, and taking care of your earnings? Is she thoroughly versed in all domestic affairs, so that she herself could do all things connected with household matters, should necessity require it?

These, I acknowledge, are very ordinary, very homely inquiries; but nevertheless they are of the highest importance. A young man who will marry, without having thoroughly made all such investigations, and becoming satisfied that his intended is not deficient, to any great extent, in these qualifications, is blind to his own highest good, and will in long after-years, amid domestic inquietude, and family troubles, indulge unavailing regrets at his blindness and folly. But whenever a young woman can be found, possessing these invaluable characteristics, I would advise the youth seeking for a companion, to win her for a wife if possible. Although she may be plain in person, and poor in property, yet she will be of more worth than rubies; and all riches cannot be compared with her. She will be a faithful friend and wise counsellor, and will smooth the rugged pathway of life. However the world and its affairs may go without, he who has such a wife, will ever have a home, where neatness and comfort, peace and love, and all that can

yield contentment and enjoyment, will smile upon him!

All the care, discrimination, and judgment urged on young men in selecting wives, I would commend to young ladies, in accepting husbands. If to the former, marriage is an important event, fraught with consequences lasting as life, it is peculiarly so to the latter. It surely is no trivial event for a daughter to leave the home of her childhood, the tender care and watchful guardianship of kind parents, the society of affectionate brothers and sisters, to confide herself, with all her interests and her happiness, to another with whom she has hitherto associated only as a friend. Is it not necessary to exercise prudence, forethought, discretion, in taking a step so momentous?

A young woman should not marry because the youthful are expected to enter matrimonial bonds at a certain age, nor merely because they have had an offer of marriage. Such an admonition may seem to be unnecessary; but I think it called for. It is true,

beyond question, that young women sometimes receive the addresses, and finally become the wives, of men for whom they have formed no very strong attachment, and, indeed, in whom they see many characteristics and habits, which they cannot approbate. This is done on the principle, that it is the first offer of marriage they have had, and may be the only opportunity of settlement for life that will ever present itself. Not a few parents have urged their daughters to such a course—totally blinded to the evils which often flow from it.

Such a procedure is fraught with danger. It perils the happiness of all coming days. How many have, under such circumstances, left the abode of their childhood, where every comfort surrounded them, to spend a life of wrangling, bitterness, and, sometimes, abject poverty. Better, a thousand times, to remain at home, better live in "single blessedness" all your days, than to become connected with a man whose disposition, habits, or character, you cannot fully approve.

Though he may be as rich as Cresus—though he may lead you to a palace for an abode, and deck you with jewels—yet, if you cannot give him your entire approbation, if your heart's fondest affections are not centred upon him, if he is not all you can sanction and love, unite not your destiny with him. The life of a contented, useful "old maid" is infinitely to be preferred to that of a wretched, heart-broken wife. "Those unequal marriages which are sometimes called *excellent matches*, seldom produce much happiness. And where happiness is not, what *is* all the rest?"

In accepting the addresses of young men, with a view to matrimony, allow me to caution you against being too much influenced by good looks and fascinating manners. It is due to young ladies to say, that they show much more good sense in this respect than the other sex. They do not select their companions so much on the ground of mere personal beauty, without reference to higher and better qualifications, as do young

men. Still, a precaution to them on this point will not be wholly useless.

Here is a young man who is gay in his manners, and fashionable in his attire—a dandy of the first water, all buckled and strapped after the latest pattern. His bosom is decked with golden chains, and his fingers with platter rings. His tongue is as prolific of lackadaisical words, as his head is devoid of good sense. He showers the politest attentions in the assembly room, or during the ride, or walk. He is, in fine, the very beau ideal of a "ladies' man!" There is another young man. His manners are respectful, but without courtly polish. His dress is plain and neat, with no display and no gaudy ornaments. He knows nothing of the thousand ways and arts by which the other makes himself so agreeable. He has no "small talk" in his vocabulary, and must utter sound sense, on useful subjects, or remain silent. He may appear somewhat awkward in his attentions to ladies, but is, nevertheless, friendly and obliging in his demeanor. In

his whole life and character, he is a retiring, but most worthy youth. Are there not some young ladies who would prefer the company of the showy, chattering fop; who would receive his address, yea, accept him as a husband, and reject the diffident, modest youth? Yet the latter would make a kind, affectionate, provident husband; likely to attain to respectability, high-standing, and wealth: while the former would most probably prove a poor, cross-grained broken-stick; ill-natured, and perhaps dissipated; dragging wife and family into the insignificance and poverty to which he speedily would sink! Surely discreet young ladies will think many times, and weigh well the consequences, before making such a choice.

Where the hand of a young woman is sought in marriage, she should look beyond the mere personal accomplishments of dress, manners, and conversational powers of him who would make her his wife. Many an individual who has the appearance and manners of a gentleman, is, in reality, a black-hearted villain—

a marriage with whom would seal their wretchedness for life. In accepting a husband, there are certain requisites which young women should consider as indispensable.

He should have some honest and useful trade, profession, or occupation. A "do-nothing" young man, will assuredly make a "good-for-nothing" husband. No one can justly charge you with sordid motives, for scrutinizing critically his capability to secure to you, and such family as may gather around you, a maintenance that shall insure you against poverty and want.

His habits should be unexceptionable. He should be honest, upright, truthful, industrious, and economical—pure in his conversation and tastes. Not only should he have the ability to obtain a livelihood, but should possess prudence and frugality to lay up and secure the fruits of his industry.

Above all, he should be strictly and rigidly *temperate*. On this point I would speak with emphasis. Most earnestly would I

admonish young women never to unite their destiny with that of a drinking young man. Alas! how many a wife, when too late, has lamented in bitter tears her short-sightedness in this respect. A young man, who, in this age of temperance, has not sufficient self-respect, pride of character, and good sense, to refrain from the intoxicating bowl before marriage, will be very likely to sink into a common drunkard afterwards. This is not always the case; but the exceptions are so rare, that she who ventures the risk, places herself in a condition which hazards her happiness for life. However proper his other habits may be, however amiable and pleasant his disposition, however bright and promising his prospects, however high his position, or respectable his family connections—if he drinks the lethean draught, even but sparingly, he is tampering with a viper, which will almost certainly sting him to death, and poison the joys, and destroy the prosperity of all connected with him.

The world is filled with scenes which attest

the need of this admonition. All around we behold the wrecks of families, torn asunder by the intemperance of husbands and fathers, which otherwise might have been united and happy. Wives forsaken, broken-hearted, impoverished—children beggared and neglected, growing up in rags and ignorance, to become the victims of sin and shame. All these attest the danger that woman encounters, who links her destiny with a drinking young man. O ye youthful and inexperienced, turn not a cold ear to my exhortation. With all the solemnity the momentous topic inspires, I beseech you, as you value a life of peace and prosperity, never, under any possible consideration, give your hand to a man who presses to his lips the intoxicating cup! Though you may have granted your affections, and plighted your troth, to one who is given, even but slightly, to this practice, if on your earnest expostulation, he will not abandon it, you should, without hesitation, break all connection with him. Every consideration of prudence, self-respect, and safety, urges you

to such a step, however painful; and every law, human and divine, will justify you in adopting it.

The suggestions which follow, on the views of Marriage that should be entertained by young men, and "Female qualifications for Marriage," are so appropriate and excellent, that I cannot forbear giving them an insertion in these pages.

"Whatever advice may be given to the contrary by friends or foes, it is my opinion that you ought to keep matrimony steadily in view. For this end, were it for no other, you ought to mingle much in society. Never consider yourself complete without this other half of yourself. It is too much the fashion among young men at the present day to make up their minds to dispense with marriage;—an unnatural, and therefore an unwise plan. Much of our character, and most of our comfort and happiness depend upon it. Many have found this out too late; that is, after age and fixed habits had partly disqualified them for this important duty.

"According to the character of the person you select, in a considerable degree, will be your own. Should a mere face fascinate you to a *doll*, you will not need much mental energy to please her; and the necessity of exertion on this account being small, your own self will sink, or at least not rise, as it otherwise might do.

"But were I personally acquainted with you, and should I perceive an *honorable* attachment taking possession of your heart, I should regard it as a happy circumstance. Life then has an object. The only thing to be observed is that it be managed with prudence, honor, and good sense.

"The case of John Newton is precisely in point. In very early life this man formed a strong attachment to a lady, under circumstances which did not permit him to make it known; which was probably well for both parties. It did not diminish *her* happiness, so long as she remained in ignorance on the subject; and in scenes of sorrow, suffering, and temptation, the hope of one day obtain-

ing her soothed him, and kept him from performing many dishonorable actions. 'The bare possibility,' he says, 'of seeing her again, was the only obvious means of restraining me from the most horrid designs, against myself and others.'

"The wish to marry, if *prudently* indulged, will lead to honest and persevering exertions to obtain a reasonable income—one which will be satisfactory to the object of your hopes, as well as to her friends. He who is determined on living a single life, very naturally contracts his endeavors to his own narrow personal wants, or else squanders freely, in the belief that he can always procure enough to support himself. Indeed it cannot have escaped even the careless observer that in proportion as an individual relinquishes the idea of matrimony, just in the same proportion do his mind and feelings contract. On the contrary, that hope which aims at a beloved partner—a family—a fireside,—will lead its possessor to activity in all his conduct. It will elicit his talents, and urge

them to their full energy, and probably call in the aid of economy; a quality so indispensable to every condition of life. The single consideration, 'What would she think were she now to see me?' called up by the obtrusion of a favorite image,—how often has it stimulated a noble mind and heart to deeds which otherwise had never been performed!

"I repeat it, I am aware that this advice is liable to abuse. But what shall be done? Images of some sort will haunt the mind more or less—female influence in some shape or other will operate. Is it not better to give the imagination a virtuous direction than to leave it to range without control, and without *end?*

"I repeat it, nothing is better calculated to preserve a young man from the contamination of low pleasures and pursuits, than frequent intercourse with the more refined and virtuous of the other sex. Besides, without such society his manners can never acquire the true polish of a gentleman,—gene-

ral character, dignity, and refinement;—nor his mind and heart the truest and noblest sentiments of a man. Make it an object then, I again say, to spend some portion of every week of your life in the company of intelligent and virtuous ladies. At all events, flee solitude, and especially the exclusive society of your own sex. The doctrines even of Zimmerman, the great apostle of solitude, would put to shame many young men, who seldom or never mix in female society.

"If you should be so unfortunate as not to have among your acquaintance any ladies whose society would, in these points of view, be profitable to you, do not be in haste to mix with the ignorant and vulgar; but wait patiently till your own industry and good conduct shall give you admission to better circles; and in the meantime cultivate your mind by reading and thinking, so that when you actually gain admission to good society, you may know how to prize and enjoy it. Remember, too, that you are not to be so selfish as to think nothing of contributing to

the happiness of others. It is blessed to *give* as well as to *receive.*

"When you are in the company of ladies, beware of silliness. It is true they will sooner forgive foolishness than ill manners, but you will, of course, avoid both. I know one young gentleman of great promise, who adopted the opinion that in order to qualify himself for female society, he had only to become as foolish as possible, while in their presence. That young man soon lost the favor of all whose friendship might have operated as a restraint; but unwilling to associate with the despicable, and unable to live in absolute solitude, he chose the bottle for his companion; and made himself, and the few friends he had, miserable.

"Nothing, unless it be the coarsest flattery, will give more offence, in the end, than to treat ladies as mere playthings or children. On the other hand, do not become pedantic, and lecture them on difficult subjects. They readily see through all this. Neither is it good manners or policy to talk much of your-

self. They can penetrate this also; and they despise the vanity which produces it. In detecting deception, they are often much quicker than we apprehend.

"A young gentleman, in one of the New England States, who had assumed the chair of the pedagogue, paid his addresses to the beautiful and sensible daughter of a respectable farmer. One day, as she was present in his school, he read to her a hymn, which he said was from his own pen. Now it was obvious to this lady, and even to some of the pupils, that the hymn was none other than that usually known by the name of the 'Harvest Hymn,' modified by the change of a few words only. How much effect this circumstance might have had I cannot say with certainty; but I know it disgusted *one*, at least, of the pupils; and I know, too, that his addresses to the lady were soon afterwards discontinued.

"A young man who would profit from the society of young ladies, or indeed from any society, must preserve a modest and respect-

ful spirit; must seek to conciliate their good will by quiet and unostentatious attentions, and discover more willingness to avail himself of their stock of information, than to display his own knowledge or abilities.

"He should observe, and learn to admire, that purity and ignorance of evil, which is the characteristic of well-educated young ladies, and which, while we are near them, raises us above those sordid and sensual considerations which hold such sway over *men*, in their intercourse with each other. He should treat them as spirits of a purer sphere, and try to be as innocent, if not as ignorant of evil as they are; remembering that there is no better way of raising himself in the scale of intellectual and moral being. But to whatever degree of intimacy he may arrive, he should never forget those little acts of courtesy and kindness, as well as that respect, and self-denial, which lend a charm to every kind of polite intercourse, and especially to that of which I am now speaking.

"Whenever an opportunity occurs, how-

ever, it is the duty of a young man to introduce topics of conversation which are decidedly favorable to mental and moral improvement. Should he happen to be attending to the same study, or reading the same book with a female acquaintance, an excellent opportunity will be afforded for putting this rule in practice.

FEMALE QUALIFICATIONS FOR MARRIAGE.

"The highest as well as the noblest trait in female character, is love to God. When we consider what are the tendencies of Christianity to elevate woman from the state of degradation to which she had, for ages, been subjected—when we consider not only what it has done, but what it is destined yet to do for her advancement,—it is impossible not to shrink from the presence of an impious, and above all an unprincipled atheistical female, as from an ungrateful and unnatural being.

"Man is under eternal obligations to Christianity and its Divine Author, undoubtedly; but woman seems to be more so.

"That charge against females which in the minds of some half-atheistical men is magnified into a stigma on Christianity itself, namely, that they are more apt to become religious than men; and that we find by far the greater part of professing Christians to be females, is in my own view one of the highest praises of the sex. I rejoice that their hearts are more susceptible than ours, and that they do not war so strongly against that religion which their nature demands. I have met with but one female, whom I knew to be an avowed atheist.

"Indeed there are very few men to be found, who are skeptical themselves, who do not prefer pious companions of the other sex. I will not stop to adduce this as an evidence of the truth of our religion itself, and of its adaptation to the wants of the human race, for happily it does not need it. Christianity is based on the most abundant evidence, of a character wholly unquestionable. But this I do and will say, that to be consistent, young men of loose principles ought not to rail at

females for their piety, and then whenever they seek for a constant friend, one whom they can love,—for they never really love the abandoned—always prefer, other things being equal, the society of the pious and the virtuous.

"Next on the list of particular qualifications in a female, for matrimonial life, I place COMMON SENSE. In the view of some, it ought to precede moral excellence. A person, it is said, who is deficient in common sense, is, in proportion to the imbecility, unfit for *social* life, and yet the same person might possess a kind of negative excellency, or perhaps even a species of piety. This view appears to me, however, much more specious than sound.

"By *common sense*, as used in this place, I mean the faculty by means of which we see things *as they* really are. It implies judgment and discrimination, and a proper sense of propriety in regard to the common concerns of life. It leads us to form judicious plans of action, and to be governed by our circumstances in such a way as will be gene-

rally approved. It is the exercise of reason, uninfluenced by passion or prejudice. To man, it is nearly what instinct is to brutes. It is very different from genius or talent, as they are commonly defined; but much better than either. It never blazes forth with the splendor of noon, but shines with a constant and useful light. To the housewife—but, above all, to the mother,—it is indispensable.

"Whatever other recommendations a lady may possess, she should have an inextinguishable thirst for improvement. No sensible person can be truly happy in the world, without this; much less qualified to make others happy. But the genuine spirit of improvement, wherever it exists, atones for the absence of many qualities which would otherwise be indispensable: in this respect resembling that 'charity' which covers 'a multitude of sins.' Without it, almost everything would be of little consequence,—with it, everything else is rendered doubly valuable.

"One would think that every sensible person, of either sex, would aspire at improve-

ment, were it merely to avoid the shame of being stationary like the brutes. Above all, it is most surprising that any lady should be satisfied to pass a day or even an hour without mental and moral progress. It is no discredit to the lower animals that—'their little all flows in at once,' that 'in ages they no more can know, or covet or enjoy,' for this is the legitimate result of the physical constitution which God has given them. But it is far otherwise with the masters and mistresses of creation; for

> 'Were man to live coeval with the sun,
> The patriarch pupil *should* be learning still,
> And dying, leave his lessons half unlearnt.'

"There are,—I am sorry to say it—not a few of both sexes who never appear to breathe out one hearty desire to rise, intellectually or morally, with a view to the government of themselves or others. They love themselves supremely—their friends subordinately—their neighbors, perhaps not at all. But neither the love they bear to themselves or others even leads them to a single series

of any sort of action which has for its ultimate object the improvement of anything higher than the condition of the mere animal. Dress, personal appearance, equipage, style of a dwelling or its furniture, with no other view, however, than the promotion of mere physical enjoyment, is the height of their desires for improvement!

"Talk to them of elevating the intellect or improving the heart, and they admit it is true; but they go their way and pursue their accustomed round of folly again. The probability is, that though they assent to your views, they do not understand you. It requires a stretch of charity to which I am wholly unequal, to believe that beings who ever conceived, for one short moment, of the height to which their natures may be elevated, should sink back without a single struggle, to a mere selfish, unsocial, animal life;—to lying in bed ten or twelve hours daily, rising three or four hours later than the sun, spending the morning in preparation at the glass, the remainder of the time till

dinner in unmeaning calls, the afternoon in yawning over a novel, and the evening in the excitement of the tea-table and the party, and the ball-room, to retire, perhaps at midnight, with the mind and body and soul in a feverish state, to toss away the night in vapid or distressing dreams.

"How beings endowed with immortal souls can be contented to while away precious hours in a manner so useless, and withal so displeasing to the God who gave them their time for the improvement of themselves and others, is to me absolutely inconceivable! Yet it is certainly done; and that not merely by a few solitary individuals scattered up and down the land; but in some of our most populous cities, by considerable numbers.

"Should the young man who is seeking an 'help meet,' chance to fall in with such *beings* as these—and some we fear there are in almost every part of our land,—let him shun them as he would the 'choke damp' of the cavern.

"Their society would extinguish, rather

than fan the flame of every generous or benevolent-feeling that might be kindling in his bosom. *With* the fond, the ardent, the never-failing desire to improve, physically, intellectually, and morally, there are few females who may not make tolerable companions for a man of sense;—*without* it, though a young lady were beautiful and otherwise lovely beyond comparison, wealthy as the Indies, surrounded by thousands of the most worthy friends, and even talented, let him beware! Better remain in celibacy a thousand years (could life last so long) great as the evil may be, than form a union with such an object. He should pity, and seek her reformation, if not beyond the bounds of possibility; but love her he should not! The penalty will be absolutely insupportable.

"One point ought to be settled,—I think unalterably settled—before matrimony. It ought indeed to be settled in early life, but it is better late, perhaps, than never. Each of the parties should consider themselves as sacredly pledged, in all cases, to yield to con-

viction. I have no good opinion of the man who expects his wife to yield her opinion to his, on every occasion, unless she is convinced. I say on *every occasion;* for that she sometimes ought to do so, seems to be both scriptural and rational. It would be very inconvenient to call in a third person as an umpire upon every slight difference of opinion between a young couple, besides being very humiliating. But if each maintain, with pertinacity, their opinion, what can be done? It does seem to me that every sensible woman, who feels any good degree of confidence in her husband, will perceive the propriety of yielding her opinion to his in such cases, where the matter is of such a nature that it cannot be delayed.

"But there are a thousand things occurring, in which there is no necessity of forming an immediate opinion, or decision, except from conviction. I should never like the idea of a woman's conforming to her husband's views to please him, merely, without considering whether they are correct or not.

It seems to me a sort of treason against the God who gave her a mind of her own, with an intention that she should use it. But it would be higher treason still, in male or female, not to yield, when actually convinced.

"Without the knowledge and the love of domestic concerns, even the wife of a peer is but a poor affair. It was the fashion, in former times, for ladies to understand a great deal about these things, and it would be very hard to make me believe that it did not tend to promote the interests and honor of their husbands.

"The concerns of a great family never can be *well* managed, if left *wholly* to hirelings; and there are many parts of these affairs in which it would be unseemly for husbands to meddle. Surely, no lady can be too high in rank to make it proper for her to be well acquainted with the character and general demeanor of all the female servants. To receive and give character is too much to be left to a servant, however good, whose service has been ever so long, or acceptable.

"Much of the ease and happiness of the great and rich must depend on the character of those by whom they are assisted. They live under the same roof with them; they are frequently the children of their tenants, or poorer neighbors; the conduct of their whole lives must be influenced by the examples and precepts which they here imbibe; and when ladies consider how much more weight there must be in one word from them, than in ten thousand words from a person who, call her what you like, is still a *fellow servant*, it does appear strange that they should forego the performance of this at once important and pleasing part of their duty.

"I am, however, addressing myself, in this work, to persons in the middle ranks of life; and here a knowledge of domestic affairs is so necessary in every wife, that the lover ought to have it continually in his eye. Not only a knowledge of these affairs—not only to know how things *ought to be done*, but how to *do them;* not only to know what ingredients ought to be put into a pie or a

pudding, but to be able *to make* the pie or the pudding.

"Young people, when they come together, ought not, unless they have fortunes, or are to do unusual business, to think about *servants!* Servants for what! To help them eat, and drink, and sleep? When they have children, there must be some *help* in a farmer's or tradesman's house, but until then, what call is there for a servant in a house, the master of which has to *earn* every mouthful that is consumed?

"Eating and drinking come *three times every day;* they must come; and, however little we may, in the days of our health and vigor, care about choice food and about cookery, we very soon get *tired* of heavy or burnt bread, and of spoiled joints of meat. We bear them for once or twice perhaps; but about the third time, we begin to lament; about the fifth time, it must be an extraordinary affair that will keep us from complaining; if the like continue for a month or two, we begin to *repent;* and then adieu to

all our anticipated delights. We discover, when it is too late, that we have not got a help-mate, but a burden; and, the fire of love being damped, the unfortunately educated creature, whose parents are more to blame than she is, unless she resolve to learn her duty, is doomed to lead a life very nearly approaching to that of misery; for, however considerate the husband, he never can esteem her as he would have done, had she been skilled in domestic affairs.

"The mere *manual* performance of domestic labors is not, indeed, absolutely necessary in the female head of the family of professional men; but, even here, and also in the case of great merchants and of gentlemen living on their fortunes, surely the head of the household ought to be able to give directions as to the purchasing of meal, salting meat, making bread, making preserves of all sorts; and ought to see the things done.

"The lady ought to take care that food be well cooked; that there be always a sufficient supply; that there be good living with-

out waste; and that in her department, nothing shall be seen inconsistent with the rank, station, and character of her husband. If he have a skilful and industrious wife, he will, unless he be of a singularly foolish turn, gladly leave all these things to her absolute dominion, controlled only by the extent of the whole expenditure, of which he must be the best judge.

"But, in a farmer's or a tradesman's family, the manual performance is absolutely necessary, whether there be domestics or not. No one knows how to teach another so well as one who has done, and can do, the thing himself. It was said of a famous French commander, that, in attacking an enemy, he did not say to his men '*go* on,' but '*come* on;' and, whoever has well observed the movements of domestics, must know what a prodigious difference there is in the effect of the words, *go* and *come*.

"A very good rule would be, to have nothing to eat, in a farmer's or mechanic's house, that the mistress did not know how to pre-

pare and to cook; no pudding, tart, pie or cake, that she did not know how to make. Never fear the toil to her: exercise is good for health; and without health there is no beauty. Besides, what is the labor in such a case? And how many thousands of ladies, who idle away the day, would give half their fortunes for that sound sleep which the stirring housewife seldom fails to enjoy.

"Yet, if a young farmer or mechanic *marry* a girl, who has been brought up only to '*play music*,' to *draw*, to *sing*, to waste paper, pen and ink in writing long and half-romantic letters, and to see shows, and plays, and read novels;—if a young man do marry such an unfortunate young creature, let him bear the consequences with temper. Let him be *just*. Justice will teach him to treat her with great indulgence; to endeavor to persuade her to learn her business as a wife; to be patient with her; to reflect that he has taken her, being apprized of her inability; to bear in mind, that he was, or seemed to be, pleased with her showy and useless acquirements;

and that, when the gratification of his passion has been accomplished, he is unjust, and cruel, and unmanly, if he turn round upon her, and accuse her of a want of that knowledge, which he well knew, beforehand, she did not possess.

"For my part, I do not know, nor can I form an idea of, a more unfortunate being than a girl with a mere boarding-school education, and without a fortune to enable her to keep domestics, when married. Of what *use* are *her* accomplishments? Of what use her music, her drawing, and her romantic epistles? If she should chance to possess a sweet disposition, and good nature, the first faint cry of her first babe drives all the tunes and all the landscapes, and all the imaginary beings out of her head forever.

"The farmer or the tradesman's wife has to *help earn* a provision for her children; or, at the least, to help to earn a store for sickness or old age. She ought, therefore, to be qualified to begin, at once, to assist her husband in his earnings. The way in which she

can most efficiently assist, is by taking care of his property; by expending his money to the greatest advantage; by wasting nothing, but by making the table sufficiently abundant with the least expense.

"But how is she to do these things, unless she has been *brought up* to understand domestic affairs? How is she to do these things, if she has been taught to think these matters beneath her study? How is the man to expect her to do these things, if she has been so bred, as to make her habitually look upon them as worthy the attention of none but low and ignorant women?

"*Ignorant*, indeed! Ignorance consists in a want of knowledge of those things which your calling or state of life naturally supposes you to understand. A ploughman is not an ignorant man because he does not know how to read. If he knows how to plough, he is not to be called an ignorant man; but a wife may be justly called an ignorant woman, if she does not know how to provide a dinner for her husband. It is cold comfort for a

hungry man, to tell him how delightfully his wife plays and sings. *Lovers* may live on very aerial diet, but husbands stand in need of something more solid; and young women may take my word for it, that a constantly clean table, well cooked victuals, a house in order, and a cheerful fire, will do more towards preserving a husband's heart, than all the 'accomplishments' taught in all the 'establishments' in the world without them."*

Other considerations might be urged on the young of both sexes, as prerequisites to a hopeful and a happy marriage. But if the reflections already offered are duly heeded, they will enable those who are influenced by them, to secure the blessings and escape the evils of the marriage state. As a general remark, I would suggest that in selecting a companion for a connection so lasting, it should be a leading object to find as great a similarity of opinions, habits, tastes, and feelings, as possible. This is especially important in regard to religious sentiments. It

* Young Man's Guide.

is a serious misfortune for a young married couple to find themselves differing materially on the subject of religion. This is more particularly an evil when both are strongly attached to their respective opinions, and anxious to attend different churches. I have frequently known this greatly to embitter the cup of domestic enjoyment. Where husband and wife can sympathize in each other's sentiments—can walk together to the house of God, with their children—can strengthen and enlighten one another in regard to the great truths to which they there listen—can unite in instructing their family in the same doctrines and principles of Christianity—it opens one of the highest and sweetest sources of domestic happiness. But an absence of this unity in religious opinions, is liable to lead to frequent disputations and contentions, which often result in recriminations, and hard and bitter feelings. There are not wanting instances where the most serious difficulties and the greatest unhappiness have grown out of these disagreements.

Hence it is both proper and needful, to admonish the young, in choosing a wife or a husband, to make a concurrence in religious faith, one of the great essentials requisite to a union.

In case of a different result—when husband and wife unfortunately find a wide disparity in the leading doctrines of their religion—they should seek to make the best of their misfortune, and guard against allowing it to prove a bone of contention in their midst. They should agree to disagree in forbearance and love. They should respect each other's views, and be cautious not to say or do that which can cast disparagement on their respective sentiments. Neither should demand or expect the other to abandon his or her doctrines, without full conviction of their erroneous nature. Both should be tolerant and forbearing—willing to grant the other the same freedom of opinion they claim for themselves.

It should be an established rule with husband and wife, to attend the worship of

God together. This is by far the most agreeable and proper procedure. Should it not be pleasant, however, for both to worship statedly in the same church, and listen to the proclamation of the same doctrines, they should arrange their plans to attend each other's meetings on alternate Sabbaths. This kind and friendly reciprocity would be fair, just, and honorable to both parties, and might lead ultimately to a similarity of opinions. But for a husband or a wife to refuse such a concession, and insist that the other shall forsake their attached place of worship, abandon their sentiments, or remain totally silent in relation to them, on pain of having the harmony and peace of the family destroyed—would be to exhibit a spirit totally ungenerous, and in violation of every dictate of the Christian religion.

I have made these suggestions, not only for the benefit of those who have recently entered upon married life, but to admonish those who are unmarried to come to an understanding on this subject, and make all

these arrangements before the consummation of their vows. Or, what is still better, let these considerations convince the youthful of the necessity of making a similarity of religious sentiment one of the chief qualifications in forming a tie, which, for good or evil, will connect them with another during the remainder of the earthly journey.

THE END.

674

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